

NEGATIONISM IN INDIA

CONCEALING THE RECORD OF ISLAM

ENLARGED EDITION

KOENRAAD ELST

Negationism in India
Concealing the record of Islam
By
Koenraad Elst
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FROM THE COVER OF "NEGATIONISM IN INDIA - CONCEALING THE RECORD OF ISLAM"

Negationism usually means the denial of the Nazi genocide of the Jews and Gypsies in World War 2. Less well-known is that India has its own brand of negationism. A section of the Indian intelligentsia is still trying to erase from the Hindus' memory the history of their persecution by the swordsmen of Islam. The number of victims of this persecution surpasses that of the Nazi crimes. The Islamic campaign to wipe out Paganism could not be equally thorough, but it has continued for centuries without any moral doubts arising in the minds of the persecutors and their chroniclers. The Islamic reports on the massacres of Hindus, destruction of Hindu temples, the abduction of Hindu women and forced conversions, invariably express great glee and pride. They leave no doubt that the destruction of Paganism by every means, was considered the God-ordained duty of the Moslem community. Yet, today many Indian historians, journalists and politicians, deny that there ever was a Hindu-Moslem conflict. They shamelessly rewrite history and conjure up *centuries of Hindu-Moslem amity*; now a growing section of the public in India and the West only knows their negationist version of history. It is not a pleasant task to rudely shake people out of their delusions, especially if these have been wilfully created; but this essay does just that.

This essay was started as an expanded translation of a Dutch-language book review of Sitaram Goel's *Hindu Temples: What Happened To Them*, which could not be published in its original form due to pro-Islamic pressure; and of an article on Islamic negationism published in the Septemeber 1992 issue of the Flemish monthly *Nucleus*.

The author:

Koenraad Elst (Leuven, 1959) grew up in the Catholic community in Belgium. He was active for some years in what is known as the New Age movement, before studying at the famed Catholic University of Leuven (KUL). He graduated in Chinese Studies, Indo-Iranian Studies and Philosophy. He took courses in Indian philosophy at the Benares Hindu University (BHU) and interviewed many Indian leaders and thinkers during

his stay in India between 1988 and 1992. He has published in Dutch about language policy issues, contemporary politics, history of science and Oriental Philosophies; in English about the Ayodhya Issue, and about the General Religio-political Situation in India.

FOREWORD

This book is a much-expanded version of an article titled *Het Islam-negationisme*, published in the September 1992 issue of the Flemish Catholic monthly *Nucleus*, combined with a review of Sitaram Goel's book "*Hindu Temples, What happened to them, vol. 2: The Islamic Evidence*". The review was written for *Infoerient*, the Dutch language periodical of the Asian and Islamic Studies department of my Alma Mater, the Catholic University of Leuven, under the title *Een Heiden tegen het Negationisme* (*A Pagan's Stand against Negationism*). However, after some dilly-dallying and moving it around like a hot potato in the mouth, it was decided that publishing this review was too dangerous: the good relations with the embassies of Islamic countries might be harmed, and the dominant trend in what is called public opinion might object to this highlighting of a frank critique of Islam.

This censorship is at once a good illustration of how the effective prohibition of Islam criticism has fast become a worldwide phenomenon. When I discovered the Islam problem during my first stay in India in 1998, and the concomitant pressure against Islam criticism, it had still seemed a Third World problem, far removed from post-Enlightenment Europe. Today, after the Rushdie affair, the threatened or effective murder of Islam critics (like the Egyptian Farag Foda), and the threats and administrative sanctions against Islam critics in Europe by non-Muslim authorities (like the sacking of the French civil servant Jean-Claude Barreau), the taboo on a frank discussion of Islam has the whole world in its grip. A study of Islam negationism, i.e., the denial of its historic crimes against humanity, has become even more necessary.

This book develops a theme I have touched upon in my earlier books on India's communal problem, Ram Janambhoomi vs. Babri Masjid and Ayodhya and After, viz. the practice of systematic distortion out of political motives, especially the destruction wrought by Islam in its jihad against Hinduism.

In my study of the Ayodhya controversy, I noticed that the frequent attempts to conceal or deny inconvenient evidence were an integral part of a larger effort to rewrite India's history and to whitewash Islam. It struck me that

this effort to deny the unpleasant facts of Islam's destructive role in Indian history is similar to the attempts by some European writers to deny the Nazi holocaust. Its goal and methods are similar, even though its social position is very different: in Europe, Holocaust negationists are a fringe group shunned by respectable people, but in India, jihad negationists are in control of the academic establishment and of the press.

I want to dedicate this book to Boutros Ghali, the new secretary-general of the United Nations Organization. As a Coptic Christian in Egypt, he has risen to unusually high posts in the administration of his country, probably higher than young Copts can today reasonably look forward to. Though he was sidelined in the end by being promoted to the symbolic post of deputy prime minister, he gave hope and pride to the fellow-members of his community by climbing as high as possible for a non-Muslim in a nominally secular state. Of course, in his difficult position he cannot speak out against the Islamic oppression which his own community has suffered; but in his own way, he has contributed to alleviating the hold of Islam on his part of the world. He played a key role in the Camp David peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, for which Egypt was thrown out of the Arab League and president Sadat was killed by Islamic fanatics. The Camp David treaty proved that a nation can put its national interests and its desire for peaceful co-existence above its commitment to pan-Islamic brotherhood with its programme of hatred and destruction. It has reminded us how in the end, reason is bound to defeat Islam.

Delhi, Innocents' Day (28 December) 1992

Some Excerpts

The next generation of political leaders, especially the left-wing that was to gain control of Congress in the thirties, and complete control in the fifties, would profess negationism very explicitly. The *radical humanist* (i.e. bourgeois Marxist) M.N. Roy wrote that Islam had fulfilled a historic mission of equality and abolition of discrimination, and that for this, Islam had been welcomed into India by the lower castes. If at all any violence had occurred, it was as a matter of justified class struggle by the *progressive forces* against the *reactionary forces*, meaning the *feudal* Hindu upper castes.

This is a modern myth springing from an incorrect and much too grim picture of the caste system, a back-projection of modern ideas of class struggle, and an uncritical swallowing of contemporary Islamic apologetics, which has incorporated some vogueish socialist values. There is no record anywhere of low-caste people welcoming the Muslims as liberators. Just like in their homeland, the Muslim generals had nothing but contempt for the common people, and all the more so because these were idolaters. They made no distinction between rich Pagans and poor Pagans: in the Quran, Allah had promised the same fate to all idolaters.

By contrast, there is plenty of testimony that these common people rose in revolt, not against their high-caste co-religionists, but against the Muslim rulers. And not only against heavy new taxes (50% of the land revenue for Alauddin Khilji, whom the negationists hail as the precursor of socialism) and land expropriations, but especially against the rape and abduction of women and children and the destruction of their idols, acts which have been recorded with so much glee by the Muslim chroniclers, without anywhere mentioning a separate treatment of Hindu rich and Hindu poor, upper-caste Kafir or low-caste Kafir. Even when some of the high-caste people started collaborating, the common people gave the invaders no rest, attacking them from hiding-places in the forests. The conversion of low-caste people only began when Muslim rulers were safely in power and in a position to reward and encourage conversion by means of tax discrimination, legal discrimination (win the dispute with your neighbour if you convert), handing out posts to converts, and simple coercion. Nevertheless, the myth which M.N. Roy spread, has gained wide currency.

M. Habib

Firstly, it was not all that serious. One cannot fail to notice that the Islamic chroniclers (including some rulers who wrote their own chronicles, like Teimur and Babar) have described the slaughter of Hindus, the abduction of their women and children, and the destruction of their places of worship most gleefully. But, according to Habib, these were merely exaggerations by court poets out to please their patrons. One wonders what it says about Islamic rulers that they felt flattered by the bloody details which the Muslims chroniclers of Hindu persecutions have left us. At any rate, Habib has never managed to underpin this convenient hypothesis with a single fact.

Secondly, that percentage of atrocities on Hindus which Habib was prepared to admit as historical, is not to be attributed to the impact of Islam, but to other factors. Sometimes Islam was used as a justification post factum, but this was deceptive. In reality economic motives were at work. The Hindus amassed all their wealth in temples and therefore Muslim armies plundered these temples.

Thirdly, according to Habib there was also a racial factor: these Muslims were mostly Turks, savage riders from the steppes who would need several centuries before getting civilized by the wholesome influence of Islam. Their inborn barbarity cannot be attributed to the doctrines of Islam.

Finally, the violence of the Islamic warriors was of minor importance in the establishment of Islam in India. What happened was not so much a conquest, but a shift in public opinion: when the urban working-class heard of Islam and realized it now had a choice between Hindu law (smṛti) and Muslim law (shariat), it chose the latter.

Mohammed Habib's excise in history-rewriting cannot stand the test of historical criticism on any score. We can demonstrate this with the example of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (997-1030), already mentioned, who carried out a number of devastating raids in Sindh, Gujrat and Punjab. This Ghaznavi was a Turk, certainly, but in many respects he was not a barbarian: he patronized arts and literature (including the great Persian poet Firdausi, who would end up in trouble because his patron suspected him of apostasy, and the Persian but Arabic-writing historian Albiruni) and was a

fine calligraphist himself. The undeniable barbarity of his anti-Hindu campaigns cannot be attributed to his ethnic stock. His massacres and acts of destruction were merely a replay of what the Arab Mohammed bin Qasim had wrought in Sindh in 712-15. He didn't care for material gain: he left rich mosques untouched, but poor Hindu temples met the same fate at his hands as the richer temples. He turned down a Hindu offer to give back a famous idol in exchange for a huge ransom: I prefer to appear on Judgement Day as an idol-breaker rather than an idol-seller. The one explanation that covers all the relevant facts, is that he was driven to his barbarous acts by his ideological allegiance to Islam. There is no record of his being welcomed by urban artisans as a liberator from the oppressive Hindu social system. On the contrary, his companion Albiruni testifies how all the Hindus had an inveterate aversion for all Muslims.

The Marxists

In *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*, Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, professors at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU, the Mecca of *secularism* and negationism) in Delhi, write that the interpretation of medieval wars as religious conflicts is in fact a back-projection of contemporary religious conflict artificially created for political purposes. In Bipan Chandra's famous formula, *communalism is not a dinosaur*, it is a strictly modern phenomenon. They explicitly deny that before the modern period there existed such a thing as Hindu identity or Muslim identity. Conflicts could not have been between Hindus and Muslims, only between rulers or classes who incidentally also belonged to one religious community or the other. They point to the conflicts within the communities. It is of course a fact that some Hindus collaborated with the Muslim rulers, but that also counted for the British colonial rulers, who are for that no less considered as foreign oppressors. For that matter, in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw the Nazis employed Jewish guards, in their search for absconding Jews they employed Jewish informers, and in their policy of deportation they even sought the co-operation of the Zionist movement: none of this can disprove Nazi-Jewish enmity. It is also a fact that the Muslim rulers sometimes made war among each other, but that was equally true for Portuguese, French and British colonizers, who fought some wars on Indian territory: they were just as much part of a single colonial

movement with a common colonial ideology, and all the brands of colonialism were equally the enemies of the Indian freedom movement. Even in the history of the Crusades, that paradigm of religious war, we hear a lot of battles between one Christian-Muslim coalition and another: these do not falsify the over-all characterization of the Crusades as a war between Christians and Muslims (triggered by the destruction of Christian churches by Muslims).

After postulating that conflicts between Hindus and Muslims as such were non-existent before the modern period, the negationists are faced with the need to explain how this type of conflict was born after centuries of a misunderstood non-existence. The Marxist explanation is a conspiracy theory: the separate communal identity of Hindus and Muslims is an invention of the sly British colonialists. They carried on a divide and rule policy, and therefore they incited the communal separateness. As the example par excellence, Prof. R.S. Sharma mentions the 19th-century 8-volume work by Elliott and Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its own Historians*. This work does indeed paint a very grim picture of Muslim hordes who attack the Pagans with merciless cruelty. But this picture was not a concoction by the British historians: as the title of their work says, they had it all from indigenous historiographers, most of them Muslims.

The original source material leaves us in no doubt that conflicts often erupted on purely religious grounds, even against the political and economical interests of the contending parties. The negationists' tactic therefore consists in keeping this original testimony out of view. A good example is Prof. Gyanendra Pandey's recent book, *"The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India"*. As the title clearly says, Pandey asserts that *communalism* (the Hindu-Muslim conflict) had been *constructed* by the British for colonial purposes and out of colonial prejudices, was later interiorized by Indians looking for new, politically profitable forms of organization in modern colonial society. This is like saying that anti-Judaism is a construction of modern capitalists to divide the working class (the standard Marxist explanation for all kinds of racism), while concealing the copious medieval testimony of anti-Judaism on undeniably non-capitalist grounds. Prof. Pandey effectively denies a

millenniumful of testimonies to Islamic persecution of the Indian (*Hindu*) Kafirs.

2.5 Foreign Support For Indian Negationism

Some foreign authors, influenced by Indian colleagues, have also added a big dose of negationism to their work on Indian history. For instance, Percival Spear, co-author (with Romila Thapar) of the *Penguin History of India*, writes: "*Aurangzeb's supposed intolerance is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on a temple site in Benares.*"

..... destroyed temple. He ordered all temples destroyed, among them the Kashi Vishvanath, one of the most sacred places of Hinduism, and had mosques built on a number of cleared temple sites. All other Hindu sacred places within his reach equally suffered destruction, with mosques built on them; among them, Krishna's birth temple in Mathura, the rebuilt Somnath temple on the coast of Gujrat, the Vishnu temple replaced with the Alamgir mosque now overlooking Benares, the Treta-ka-Thakur temple in Ayodhya. The number of temples destroyed by Aurangzeb is counted in 4, if not in 5 figures. According to the official court chronicle, Aurangzeb "ordered all provincial governors to destroy all schools and temples of the Pagans and to make a complete end to all Pagan teachings and practices". The chronicle sums up the destructions like this: "Hasan Ali Khan came and said that 172 temples in the area had been destroyed... His majesty went to Chittor, and 63 temples were destroyed... Abu Tarab, appointed to destroy the idol-temples of Amber, reported that 66 temples had been razed to the ground."

In quite a number of cases, inscriptions on mosques and local tradition do confirm that Aurangzeb built them in forcible replacement of temples (some of these inscriptions have been quoted in Sitaram Goel: *Hindu Temples*, vol.2, along with a number of independent written accounts). Aurangzeb's reign was marked by never-ending unrest and rebellions, caused by his anti-Hindu policies, which included the reimposition of the jizya and other zimma rules, and indeed the demolition of temples.

Aurangzeb did not stop at razing temples: their users too were levelled. There were not just the classical massacres of thousands of resisters, Brahmins, Sikhs. What gives a more pointed proof of Aurangzeb's fanaticism, is the execution of specific individuals for specific reason of intolerance. To name the best-known ones: Aurangzeb's brother Dara

Shikoh was executed because of apostasy (i.e. taking an interest in Hindu philosophy), and the Sikh guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded because of his objecting to Aurangzeb's policy of forcible conversions in general, and in particular for refusing to become a Muslim himself. Short, Percival Spear's statement that Aurangzeb's fanaticism is but a hostile legend, is a most serious case of negationism.

An example of a less blatant (i.e. more subtle) form of negationism in Western histories of India, is the India entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Its chapter on the Sultanate period (which was much more bloody than even the Moghul period) does not mention any persecutions and massacres of Hindus by Muslims, except that Firuz Shah Tughlaq "made largely unsuccessful attempts to convert his Hindu subjects and sometimes persecuted them". The article effectively obeys the negationist directive that "characterization of the medieval period as a time of Hindu- Muslim conflict is forbidden".

It also contains blissful nonsense about communal amity It also contains blissful nonsense about communal amity in places where the original sources only mention enmity. Thus, it says that Bahmani sultan Tajuddin Firuz extracted tribute payments and the hand of the king's daughter from the Hindu bastion Vijayanagar after two military campaigns, and that this resulted in "the establishment of an apparently amicable relationship between the two rulers". Jawaharlal Nehru considered the induction of Hindu women in Muslim harems as the cradle of composite culture (his euphemism for Hindu humiliation), but it is worse if even the venerable Encyclopedia considers the terms of debate as a sign of friendship. At any rate, the article goes on to observe naively that peace lasted only for ten years, when Vijaynagar forces inflicted a crushing defeat on Firuz. In this case, the more circumspect form of negationism is at work: keeping the inconvenient facts out of the readers' view, and manipulating the terminology.

An American historian's book is introduced thus: "In this book [Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India], Sandra Freitag examines one of the central problems of modern Indian history, the Hindu-Muslim conflict, with new and provocative insight. She challenges long-standing interpretations by defining this conflict as a developing social

process groups, not simply Hindu or Muslim, in highly specific local contexts bound together in a changing institutional order."

This sophisticated verbiage cannot conceal that the book's approach is merely the standard secularist version propagated by Indian establishment historians since decades. There is nothing new and provocative about a book that claims to explain communalism without touching on its single most important determinant, viz. the doctrine laid down in Islamic scripture, and that blurs the clear-cut process of India's communalization by Islam with the help of scapegoats like colonialism.

CHAPTER ONE - NEGATIONISM IN GENERAL

Negationism means the denial of historical crimes against humanity. It is not a reinterpretation of known facts, but the denial of known facts. The term negationism has gained currency as the name of a movement to deny a specific crime against humanity, the Nazi genocide on the Jews in 1941-45, also known as the holocaust (Greek: fire sacrifice) or the Shoah (Hebrew: disaster). Negationism is mostly identified with the effort at re-writing history in such a way that the fact of the Holocaust is omitted.

The negationists themselves prefer to call themselves revisionists, after all they think that there is nothing to deny or negate, and that the known facts of history are a fabrication which will be exposed when history is given a second look or revised. Many commentators use the two terms interchangeably, and it has become impossible to use the word revisionism (once used as a Maoist term for Khrushchev's destalinization) except in the sense of negationism. Only a few purists, like the Flemish scholar Gie van den Berghe (working at the Institute for the History of World War 2 in Brussels), insist on the distinction between negationism alias revisionism, and the legitimate revisionism. Revisionism *stricto sensu* is then defined as the normal activity of historians, viz. the reassessment of given historical facts.

For instance, when a country has won a war, its official historians will often write a version of the history of the war in which the dates and figures are correct, but into which a very slanted interpretation is woven (with all the guilt and the barbarity being ascribed to the opponent): it is then the duty of historians to re-analyze the facts and give a new and more balanced interpretation. Such revision of the established story is often controversial, as it is usually an attack on the version preferred by established political interests. But normally, after some turbulence, the revisionists' critique is either rejected as too extreme, or incorporated in a more advanced and more balanced official version of history. This way, revisionism *stricto sensu* is part of the normal progress of scientific history-writing. By contrast, in negationism, facts are not re-interpreted but denied.

As the term revisionism has become ambiguous, we will not use it here. The pollution of language with unclear terminology is a problem closely related to that of history falsification, so in this context ever more than elsewhere, we prefer clear terminology. We will therefore speak of negationism on the one hand, and re-interpretation of history on the other.

1.1. BONAFIDE RE-INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

Before we describe the problem of negationism, let us first look at the bonafide revision of the history of Nazism and the Holocaust, in order to avoid confusion between the intellectual crime of negationism and the proper task of historians to re- investigate and re-assess known and undisputed historical facts. The history of Nazism is a complex one, and it is only natural that historians do not take received wisdom and dominant interpretations for granted. Even if some negationists with a political axe to grind would deny facts, sincere historians still have a professional duty to study these facts more closely *sine ira nec studio* (without aversion nor preference) and to amend interpretations which on closer analysis are no longer sustainable.

One point of discussion among historians, already since the early fifties, has been the degree of intentionality of the Nazi genocide on the Jews, on the extent to which the Holocaust had been pre-planned. The intentionalist theory says that the Nazi leadership knew from the very beginning (early 1920s) that, once it got the chance, it would exterminate the entire Jewish population living within its domains. The functionalist theory says that the decision to send the Jews to the gas chambers was only the culmination of a process which had started with far less drastic measures, but in which each new phase made the next and uglier phase thinkable as well as technically within reach.

Today, the intentionalist explanation has been largely abandoned for the functionalist one (though the remaining intentionalists may tell you the opposite). The gas chambers had not been planned years in advance, but were the culmination of a succession of two strings of events (a possible third contributor will be dealt with later).

The one escalatory process goes from general anti-Jewish propaganda through cancellation of Jews' citizenship (1935), exclusion of Jews from professional and economic life (1938), encouraged emigration of Jews, violence against Jewish establishments by Nazi thugs, internment of Jews together with political opponents in work camps, herding of Jews in occupied territories into ghettos, pogroms with the aid of local militias,

deportation of German Jews and political opponents to camps in the occupied territories (because German public opinion couldn't stomach too much repression under its own eyes), killing these prisoners on a less systematic scale or letting them die through hardships, and finally the industrial-scale extermination in the gas chambers.

It is established that as late as 1940, the Nazi final solution (Endlösung) consisted in the removal of all Jews from German-held territories, either to Palestine (in co-operation with the Zionist movement 1937-39) or to an area in the colonial world, notably Madagascar. But Britain did not want to let large numbers of Jews into Palestine, nor did any country agree to take in large numbers of German Jewish refugees, and when Germany lost the Battle of Britain in 1940, it became clear that the colonial world was going to remain out of reach. So, something else had to be tried.

The other tributary to the final extermination campaign was the forced sterilization of carriers of hereditary diseases, followed by the euthanasia programme which, between 1939 and 1941, killed 70,000 handicapped and mentally deranged people as a matter of racial purification. It had to be stopped because of massive protest from the German public opinion and the Churches, but it had given the Nazis a taste of how to exterminate on an industrial scale, and also taught them that the only politically feasible way to do it, even in wartime, was under maximum secrecy.

The decision to resort to the total extermination of the Jews was announced by Hermann Goering on 31 July 1941 and finalized in detail at the Wannsee conference on 20 January 1942. A small extermination camp had already been started one month earlier in Chelmno. The decision to physically liquidate the Jews had not yet been taken in 1922 or even 1933. The Germans who had voted for the Nazis had voted in many cases for anti-Judaism, but not for the Holocaust. That at least is the functionalist assessment of the historical material, corroborated by a lot of research since the early fifties. The intentionalist theory, which says that the Holocaust had been the Nazi action programme from the start, is still popular in anti-German stereotyping but has little to recommend itself among historians.

A second case of bonafide re-assessment of the history of Nazism and the Holocaust, concerns the question of whether the Holocaust has a unique

status in history, recently highlighted in the so-called *historikerstreit* (German: "struggle among historians"). Among German historians, a lively debate was started in 1986 when Ernst Nolte questioned this uniqueness.

There are two different aspects to this uniqueness question. The first concerns the comparative assessment of the Nazi crimes with such a comparison and deride it as a trick to minimize and banalize the Nazi crimes. Other historians, and not only Nolte, maintain that the comparison holds in most respects. Stalin's massacres of the kulaks, of (suspected) political opponents and their families, of the educated classes among subject nations (Poles, Estonians), etc., were wellplanned, large-scale, systematic, merciless and ideologically motivated. The number of Stalin's victims exceeded that of Hitler's (when the German army entered the Soviet Union, it was welcomed as a liberator in many places, but it lost that credit by treating the Slavas as *Untermenschen*, less-than-humans). More importantly, Stalin's massacres largely preceded Hitler's: in the 1930s alone, he had between 15 and 20 million people killed, a number of victims per decade literally unprecedented in world history. When in 1950 the leftist intellectuals Sartre and Merleau-Ponty joined the debate on the concentration camps and the bloody repression in the Soviet Union, they acknowledged that Hitler's camps owed a lot to Stalin's camps.

So, the possible third contributor mentioned above, which should be considered when we investigate the determinants of the Holocaust, was the inspiring example of Stalin's massacres on a scale which Hitler tried (but failed) to emulate. Of course the Nazi crimes cannot be explained as a simple reaction to and imitation of Stalin's (and Lenin's) crimes; but there is no doubt that the new horizons in organised mass murder which Stalin had opened have contributed to the very thinkability of the Holocaust. They also created an intense fear of Communism, the sense of an all-out struggle for life against this Bolshevik barbarity, which in turn made extreme steps against all who could be accused of any kind of association with Communism (including the Jews, via "the Jew Karl Marx") acceptable to many Germans; and which convinced many Europeans of the need to collaborate with the Nazis as a comparative lesser evil.

It was already in about 1950 that historians had sought a common denominator for Nazism and Stalinism, which was found in the concept of totalitarianism. The pro-socialist spirit of the times did not receive this

concept very well, and in circles where double standards for Hitler and Stalin are still upheld, you will be told that the concept of totalitarianism was a failure. The Historikerstreit was, in a sense, a new episode to the totalitarianism debate, but focusing more on events and actions than on ideology and structures. However, the German anti-Communists weakened their case by drawing an exaggerated parallel between Nazi Germany and Communist East Germany: equating Stalin's brutality and authoritarianism with Hitler's is defensible, but equating Honecker with Hitler and the Berlin Wall with Auschwitz is of course exaggerated.

There is a second aspect to the uniqueness debate, highlighted in public forums in the U.S. since the seventies: there is an argument over the claim made by many Jews (like the Nobel-prize winning writer Elie Wiesel) that the Holocaust is an unspeakably unique, un-analyzable and incomparable event. This attitude is closely linked with the (outdated) intentionalist theory: the unique thing about the Jewish genocide as compared with other mass-murders is that there was an ineffable diabolical will behind it. Nazism embodied the fullest manifestation of an age-old intention of the world to destroy the Jews. Every attempt to historicize the Holocaust, to explain it with universal socio-political, economical and cultural factors, is a sacrilege, a breach of taboo: the factors which might explain other massacres do not apply here, the Nazi holocaust was nothing but pure naked Evil. This claim to uniqueness in suffering is the observe side of the claim to being God's chosen people. In fact, as large sections of the Jewish community outside Israel are losing their religious fervour (parallel to the secularization of the Christian communities), the Holocaust memory has started to replace the Torah (the five books attributed to Moses) as the cornerstone of Jewish identity.

This claim to uniqueness has become more insistent as international sympathy for Israel waned. After the 6-day war in June 1967, Israel had come to be regarded as a considerable military power imposing its will on occupied territories, not a David but a Goliath. With the Yom Kippur war of 1973, sympathy continued to decrease, and Arab oil power forced Western governments to become friendlier towards the Arab states and more aloof from Israel. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the suppression of the Palestinian revolt (intifada) brought Israel a continued decrease in international sympathy. Almost in direct proportion to this shift in the

international attitude to the state of Israel, the Holocaust gets more and more emphasized as the foundation myth and justification of Israel and of its policies. Another factor in the increased sacralization of the holocaust is a cultural and political shift within Israel, where the Zionist founders generation with its forward-looking no- nonsense project of building a modern state is being replaced by more traditionalist tendencies which keep on cultivating the memories of persecution.

Efforts to study the Holocaust in the historical context easily get branded as a lack of respect for the victims and their next of kin, as an attempt to banalize the Holocaust, or as a veiled attempt to deny it. Other genocides can be called unique in their own way, but did not have the same absolutely evil quality that Auschwitz had. Auschwitz is a turning-point in history, changing our ethical view of mankind, our esthetics ("can one still write poetry after Auschwitz?" - Sartre) and metaphysics ("It is stupid and reprehensible to continue philosophizing after Auschwitz just like before..." - Lyotard). It was not a historical but a metaphysical and religious event, a kind of reverse theophany (God's manifestation in the stream of history), or rather diabolophany (devil-manifestation). According to Rabbi Emil Fackenheim, the Holocaust was the only example of Absolute Evil.

A dispassionate historian cannot subscribe to this uniqueness claim. The Holocaust is merely one in a series of genocides. Without anyhow denying the Holocaust, we should put it in the perspective of other crimes against humanity (nor just crimes against Jewry). And we should keep in mind that all people who suffer, who are pushed into suffering with their entire being and have little occasion to contemplate other people's suffering, tend to over-estimate the comparative horror of their own suffering.

Within one century after Columbus' arrival, the entire native American population of the Caribbean islands was exterminated, probably 8 million people. In continental Latin America, only 12 million people survived after a century of colonization - while the population in 1492 is estimated at up to 90 million. True, many died because of new diseases which the colonizers had involuntarily brought with them, and many died not by massacre but under the hardships of slavery (which also happened to many prisoners in the Nazi work camps), but the number of literally massacred people still amounted to millions. In North America too, the 2 million native inhabitants of Patagonia (southern Chile and Argentina) were gradually but

systematically killed to the last, as were all the inhabitants of Tasmania in a single campaign, and most of the aboriginals of Australia: in these cases, the genocide was entirely intentional.

The number of Africans killed in the age of the slave trade and colonial conquest has been estimated at up to 50 million. It has been said that Europeans found the Holocaust so gruesome because the things which they had considered acceptable in the case of black savages had now been committed on white Europeans. In the conquests of America and Africa, the same psychology was at work as in Auschwitz: the inferior races had to make way (or Lebensraum, living space) for the superior race. In some cases the massacre was functional, the result of an unplanned escalation. In others however, the massacre was entirely intentional and pre-planned.

Between 1915 and 1917, the Turks massacred nearly 1.5 million Christian Armenians, nearly the entire population of Western Armenia, or almost half of all the then living Armenians. Another million survived deportation thanks to the timely defeat of the Ottoman empire: the Turks' goal was the total extermination of the Armenians, nothing less. In relative though not in absolute figures this is worse than what Hitler did to the Jews. Western Armenia has been entirely cleared of its original population, and the remaining church buildings are used by the army as targets for artillery practice.

Even outside the Islamic and the European sphere, genocides are not unknown: the 19th-century Zulu emperor Shaka purposely exterminated subdued populations in the order of magnitude of a million. In antiquity, the Assyrians, like early Stalins, both massacred and deported entire nations.

Of the Gypsies, at least 400,000 were killed in the same annihilation camps as the Jews, and some more Gypsies were killed in ordinary massacres. It is remarkable that the Gypsies are hardly ever mentioned in connection with the Nazi extermination campaign, as are the estimated 6 million Russians who died in Nazi captivity (apart from another 20 million Russians who died in war circumstances). Then again, it is only natural: all people who have suffered, complain of (or at least notice) a general lack of interest from outsiders in their experiences. The remarkable thing is rather the enormous attention which has been given to the genocide committed on the Jews.

This attention is not out of proportion, and is in principle a good thing; but its justification, viz. "beware not to let this happen again", is in stark contradiction with the unicity claim. It is precisely because non-demonic, purely human factors may, in a given historical configuration, converge to cause a genocide, of which the Nazi Holocaust is merely an outstanding example, that we have to study past genocides like the one in Auschwitz in order to avoid similar events in the future. If Auzchwitz had been a totally unique event beyond human understanding, there would be no fear of repetition and no need to study it.

It would be a bit harsh to say it before a Jewish audience, but it is nonetheless an incontrovertible fact: one of the earliest genocides has been described and ideologically motivated in their own sacred Scripture, the Tenakh (acronym from Torah + Naviim + Ketuvim, i.e. Moses' Regulations, Prophetic books, and Writings; known to Christians as the Old Testament). The massacres of neighbouring nations and all kinds of idolaters by the prophets and established kings of the Promised Land were not even the worst. The worst was in the very beginning, when the Israelite people conquered this Land which they claim Yahweh had promised them.

In the books Deuteronomy, Numbers and Joshua, we read how Moses and his successor Joshua receive orders from their god Yahweh to exterminate the entire population (women, children and even animals included) of the cities in the Promised Land, then known as Kanaan (Deut.2:34, 20:12-17), as well as in all cities where idolatry was practised (Deut.13:13-17). In cities outside Kanaan, they could take booty and slaves, but the men had to be killed. At Yahweh's explicit command, all the men, women and male children of Midian (outside Kanaan) were killed, and the virgin girls and the cattle distributed among the Israelites (Num.31:7- 18). Inside Kanaan, the Israelites had no mercy, and the book Joshua describes how the populations of Jericho, Ai, Makkeda, Libna, Lakis, Eglon, Hebron, Debir and its vassal cities, were exterminated (Jo.6:21-27, 8:24-29, 10:28-39). Joshua created Lebensraum for the chosen people by exterminating the Kanaanites, with God on his side: "This way Joshua conquered the land: the hill country, the suthern desert, the lowlands, the coastal strip, and he killed all the kings. He did not let anyone escape and he destroyed every living being, just like Yahweh the god of Israel had ordered." (Jo.10:40)

Many Bible scholars believe that this story is highly exaggerated: the Israelite conquest of Kanaan took place some 7 centuries before the Bible text was edited, and its description may have been adapted to suit the ideological needs of the Israelite people and its priestly class at the time of writing. Probably Moses had led a fairly small group which had to settle amid existing populations, on whom the cult of Yahweh (and with it, the integration into the Israelite nation) was imposed only gradually. Nonetheless, the story as it is, and which is revered as revealed Scripture, does contain an ideology of genocide, no matter what lofty ethical or religious insights may be present in other parts of the Bible.

It would be unfair to hold the present-day Jewish community guilty of an effective commitment to this ideology of God-ordained self-righteousness at any cost, including genocide. Even if there is an amount of self-righteousness in the Israelis' attitude in the occupied territories, it is nothing but gross rhetoric to say that Israeli occupation is the new Nazism, as was claimed in a UN resolution, now repealed). Even the crassest fundamentalists are not calling for a Joshua-style terror campaign: the Jews regard Joshua as part of their history, not to be disowned, but not to be repeated in the modern world either.

Today, Israel is the most democratic, humane and tolerant society in West Asia. If it claims defensible borders and sufficient territory, this is a legitimate secular claim, especially if one considers the most likely alternative, viz. the incorporation into the Islamic world with its retrograde, financial and dictatorial regimes which threaten to destroy Israel. The Arab world, itself the result of ruthless conquest, and which continues to expand at the expense of internal minorities like the Kurds, Assyrians (Aramaic-speaking Christians) and Berbers, is in no position to criticize Israel's desire for safe territory for its dense population.

Nevertheless, even if the God-ordained genocide attributed to Moses and Joshua has not been emulated by the Jewish people, its scriptural sanction has certainly played a destructive role in history. One cannot deny that the Biblical injunctions to destroy Pagans by all means has contributed to the extreme self-righteousness against Pagans which Christianity has displayed during its most expansive phases.

The extermination of native populations in America and Oceania by Christians could not have taken place on the same scale if those populations had not been Pagans. Modern Christians claim that not the missionaries but the uneducated and un-Christian gold-seekers were responsible for the plight of the native Americans; but even if we disregard the destructive role played by many missionaries, the fact remains that even the most illiterate Christian adventurer remembered one thing from his Christian upbringing, viz. that Pagans are inferior to Christians and that in dealing with them, different ethical standards apply. Intra-Christian wars were never that extreme, and the worst wars in Christian Europe before the secularization of politics in the 18th-19th century was precisely religious wars against Pagans or heretics: the war of the Teutonic Knights against the Baltic Pagans (ending in the annihilation of Paganism by the 15th century), the Crusade against the Manichean Cathar sect in southern France (1209-29, an intentional genocide), the "thirty years' war" between Catholic and Protestant powers (1618-48, killing 5 million Germans, one third of the population).

Islam is another zealous successor to Moses' heritage: its destruction of Pagan populations and cultures was always committed in the belief that the same God who had Moses' enemies wiped out, had now ordained the Islamic trail of conquest and destruction. This conviction immunized mujahedin against doubts arising in their conscience.

The occurrence of genocide in Jewish Scripture has of course been pointed out by people who want to justify their anti-Jewish feelings or policies. The latest example is the Croatian president, Franjo Tudjman who has been trying to explain to the world why the Croatian government during World War 2 had killed so many Jews. According to newspaper reports, he has written a book in Croatian in 1989, titled *Wastelands: Historical Truth*, in which he refers to the Biblical narrative and comments that for the Jews, "genocidal violence is a natural phenomenon... It is not only allowed, but even recommended". This may win him some sympathy among supporters of the Palestinian cause, but it is quite misplaced: the anti-Jewish violence of the last centuries and especially of the Nazis and their Croatian allies had nothing to do with the gruesome way in which Moses and Joshua conquered the Promised Land. The contents and orientation of the Jewish religion have fundamentally changed since the days of Moses, and the Jews

have practised live and let live for many centuries, during which they contributed immensely to the economic and intellectual life of their host countries.

Genocide is not natural to any individual or nation. The behaviour of human beings is conditioned not so much by their blood or ancestry or nationality, but by their thinking. Genocide is the outcome of an ideology. It could happen to Moses' Israelites and to Hitler's Germans, to the Caliph's Turks and to the colonizing Europeans, because they believed that genocide was justified as a means to a superior goal. Each of the genocidal movements believed it was a kind of chosen people, destined to rule a specified part of the world (as in the case of Christianity, Colonialism, Islam and Communism).

While there are differences of method and quantity, it must be clear now that the difference between the Nazi genocide and other genocides is not absolute and metaphysical. So, the comparative assessment of Hitler's and Stalin's massacres, and the comparative assessment of the genocide on the Jews and the genocides on the Red Indians, Black Africans, Tasmanians, Armenians, Gypsies and other nations, are legitimate objects of study. They don't need suspect political motives. On the contrary, it is the refusal to address these topics of history, the desire to prevent such lines of study, that demonstrates political compulsions.

1.2 DENYING THE HOLOCAUST

A wholly different matter from re-interpretation of known historical facts, is the denial of these facts. In Europe we have the negationism of a handful of historians and extreme-right groups concerning the Nazi extermination campaign against the Gypsies and the Jews, which took place between 1941 and 1945. Their claim is that this Nazi extermination campaign is in fact a concoction. The widespread belief that the Holocaust did take place, would merely be the work of a conspiracy.

There is, according to the negationists, no dearth of motives for floating the concoction of the Holocaust. The two most important ones concern the Communists and the Jews.

In order to legitimate their own horrible regime, the Communists had to print Fascism (a term often used when Nazism is meant) in the most terrible colours. It is true that they always throw the swearword Fascist at everyone: from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn to the Dalai Lama, every decent human being who stands in the way of Communism gets branded as a Fascist. Now, according to the Negationists, the Communists had to invent gruesome crimes for Fascism, and to make the sting of the swearword Fascist sharper. A case in point, they argue, is the massacre of Polish officers at Katyn: blamed on the Nazis by the Soviets (an allegation adopted by the other Allies, so that as late as 1989 the British Foreign Office still denied that evidence for Soviet responsibility existed), but in fact committed by the Soviets themselves. If the Communists could falsely accuse the Nazis about Katyn, why not about Auzchwitz?

But more than the Communists, it was the Jews who, according to the negationists, had every reason to invent the Holocaust myth. Look at its effects: the immediate outcome of the successful spreading of the Holocaust myth was that in 1948 the United Nations could not deny the Jews their new state Israel, and that this new state could at once claim huge reparation payments from Germany. Today the Holocaust memory is the justification of Israel's political claims to safe, defensible borders - which effectively means the annexation of the occupied territories. The last two decades, Western support for Israel has become less unconditional, and to reclaim

this support the Holocaust memory has been made more insistent, with the orchestrated flood of books and films about the Holocaust.

So, according to the negationists, the victims were in fact the aggressors. With fakes photographs and false testimonies by tutored eyewitnesses the Jews framed the Nazis on a huge and horrible crime of genocide which had never been committed. After all, the declaration of war by France and Britain against Germany in 1939 had been arranged by the Jewish conspiracy which controlled finance (and therefore politics) in those countries. And the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann had immediately declared that in this war all the Jews would be on England's side. So, the war itself had been forced on Germany by the Jews, and the Holocaust myth was the next element in this Jewish conspiracy aimed at sucking Germany's blood and resources. That is very briefly the negationists' position on why this Holocaust story was made so popular.

The negationist position is not widely believed, in fact it is widely detested as the motivated history-distortion which it really is. In France and Germany, publishing negationist writings is punishable by law (in Germany, denial of the massacre of Germans in ex-German territories in 1945 was equally made punishable). Negationism can boast of only a few academics in its ranks, most academics will have no truck with it, and some have published thorough and precise refutations of negationism. Most of the negationist publications are pamphlets of a pitiable intellectual calibre. Yet, a few academic-looking institutes for "revision of the history of World War II" have been set up, notably the Institute for Historical Review in California. And at least a few negationist academics and writers are clever polemicists and have managed to create a semblance of respectability for negationism in some circles.

The methods of the negationists are intellectually quite objectionable, they do all the things which are in the "don't" column of methodological vademecums. For instance, they commit unbelievable feats of "quoting out of context". I realize that it is often a cheap excuse in polemical forums to allege quoting out of context: it is done when you cannot escape the conclusions which your opponent has drawn from your own side's statements. By invoking (without specifying) the all-redeeming context, you can claim that the analyzed statement really meant something else than your opponent had assumed in making his analysis. Nevertheless, the false

allegation can only work because the genuine product, quoting out of context, does exist. The negationists shamelessly change the meaning of sentences by plucking them from their contexts. Whenever one of their opponents, in the middle of a systematic refutation of negationism, dares to concede that "there are contradictions in the testimony of ex-prisoner X", or that "no records are extant from concentration camp Y", they quote this one line and go on to conclude that this opponent "has had to revise his earlier belief in the Holocaust under the impact of new findings".

For example, they eagerly quote the German historian Martin Broszat's statement that there were no gas chambers designed for largescale killing in the German Reich. Yes, that is what he said, and he was probably right: no matter how gruesome otherwise, the camps inside Germany, like Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen, did not contain such gas chambers. For, Broszat continues but the negationists omit, "the mass destruction of Jews by gassing was mostly done in the occupied territories".

Negationist pamphlets are often very unashamed to announce from the beginning that they are not meant to do history, but merely want to take an unprejudiced look at the allegations of Nazi genocide. Some of their more pretentious publications have a lot of academic-looking references and quotations (referring mostly to other negationist authorities and to the pamphlet literature), as well as out-of-context quotes from original Auschwitz testimonies and research, in which witnesses a charge are turned into witness a discharge. Negationist publications also contain a lot of plain lies, apparently counting on the public's lack of time and means to check sources.

In every document they know how to select a line in their own favour. If a judge convicts them because of their negationism, they clamour that it is outside the judiciary's competence to judge historical methods and theories (apart from seeing it as proof of the omnipresent Jewish conspiracy); but when a judge refrains from passing judgement on their methods and theories, they explain it as a vindication of negationism. When the leading French negationist professor Faurisson was convicted several times on charges of slander and incitement to racial hatred, but not because of his history distortion, he claimed that henceforth nobody had the right to denounce his method, and that "it is now permitted to declare that the gas chambers have not existed".

Their easiest technique of deception consists in simply keeping all the evidence for the Holocaust out of the view of the readers, or in denying its existence. The numerous testimonies by camp survivors and Nazi officials (of whom some to appease their conscience, had already leaked the truth to the outside world during the war) are simply not mentioned at all, except if seemingly gross contradictions or mistakes can be shown in them, so as to create the impression that the Holocaust myth is based on the rantings of a few paranoid misfits.

They challenge the established historical certainty of the Holocaust not with precise questions and challenges to competent historians, but with stunts and bluff aimed at the broader public. Thus, in 1979 the Institute for Historical Review promised \$ 50,000 to whomever could prove that people had been gassed in the Nazi camps. The small print said that candidates for the prize must have seen someone being gassed, must submit an autopsy report of a victim gassed with Zyklon-B gas. After one year, it announced triumphantly that the prize could not be awarded as no one had come forward with the proof. Actually, the items demanded by the Institute are available, but most self-respecting historians have decided to boycott the negationists completely, as even a public trial of strength would only give them publicity (apart from the fact that most relevant original documents were in pre-glasnost Soviet and Polish hands). In my opinion, it is better to face the negationist challenge head-on, and to confront them with the evidence they defiantly ask for.

The chief argument of the negationists is that the evidence given for the Holocaust is flawed. There are indeed some flaws in the available evidence for the Holocaust. To start with, there is comparatively little of it. In most camps the Nazis had thoroughly destroyed all the evidence by the time the Soviet and Anglo-American forces moved in. Moreover, the evidence available is in coded language, because the Holocaust was conducted as a secret operation: hardly anywhere in the Nazi documents is it written explicitly that people have been gassed. Nevertheless, the remaining evidence is still overwhelming: testimonies by camp guards and Nazi officials, given during trial or as a voluntary act; testimonies by transport workers, chemical engineers and people otherwise connected with the material realization of the Holocaust; diaries by prisoners, survivors in all

kinds of forums after the liberation. The code to the secret language of Nazi documents has been revealed by Nazi officials.

The other flaw in the available evidence, and which is always the negationists' crowning argument, is the contradictions and inaccuracies of the camp survivors' testimonies. For instance, people have claimed that fellow prisoners had been gassed in camps in which no gas chambers ever existed. Or, the authentic diaries of some prisoners give a very different picture from the version which they gave in interviews after the war. Of course, if one does not select merely the flawed pieces of testimony, but keeps an eye on the general body of evidence, such inaccuracies, contradictions and in some cases even lies, are only what one can expect when people testify to what they have experienced of a real event. These things can be explained with our general knowledge of human psychology: e.g., there is a kind of envy among people who have suffered when they find that people who have gone through more spectacular suffering get all the attention, and so they make their own story a bit more interesting. Even after an ordinary traffic accident, people's versions differ, yet there is no doubt about some basics, such as the actual occurrence of the accident. Digging up inaccuracies in a few testimonies in order to deny the entire body of evidence is the safest way of lying: you pronounce correct judgements about some of the parts, and merely by acting as if these few parts constitute the whole, you implicitly tell a huge lie about the whole.

Finally, the negationist position is sought to be given some credibility by discrediting the forum where the Holocaust was officially put on record: the Nurnberg trial. Jurists now know that the Nurnberg trial violated some rules of justice, esp. by thwarting the rights of the defence, and by judging on the basis of retro-active laws created ad hoc. When German officers who had committed crimes against humanity in obedience to orders, justified these with the universally valid rule of military discipline *Befehl ist Befehl* (an order is an order), it was ruled that military orders should not be obeyed when they violate certain human principles (in emulation of this ruling, German courts have recently convicted East German soldiers who had obeyed the order to shoot people who tried to cross the Berlin wall; the mixed feelings over this judgement have brought the dissatisfaction with the Nurnberg trial back to mind). Worst of all, the Nurnberg trial was a cynical farce to the extent that some of the parties sitting in judgement were just as

guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, starting with the Soviet Union.

And yet, it is obvious that all these flaws in the judicial treatment of the Holocaust and of those responsible for it, do not make any difference to the question whether the Holocaust actually took place. The negationists will always try to pick on their opponents' presentation of the facts, to pull the attention away from the facts themselves.

In their attempts to convince public opinion, the negationists currently benefit from a few circumstances.

Firstly, there is a feeling that the Holocaust is over- exploited. In certain Jewish circles an excessive cultivation of the Holocaust memory seems to have taken place. Therefore the Holocaust memory is seen by some as an instrument of Jewish self-aggrandizement, and as the bedrock of Israeli self-righteousness. This perception is especially strong in pro-Palestinian circles.

Similarly, there is an impression of self-righteousness in high-profile anti-Nazi spokesmen. Some statements by the French Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld have created irritation, e.g. that the leftist lawyer Jacques Verges was "a shame for his profession" by accepting the offer to defend the war criminal Klaus Barbie (while defence of criminals by lawyers is the former's right and the latter's job). Klarsfeld's action in Germany in 1992 against restrictions on the massive immigration of Romanian Gypsies was equally considered misplaced and self-righteous: any country has a right to its own immigration policy, and Germany had a much more generous refugee policy than any other country (it accepted 2 lakh refugees from Yugoslavia, France less than 1,000). This type of self-righteousness is perceived as a consequence of the Holocaust credit, and so, many people would like the Holocaust talk to stop for a while. That does not amount to an endorsement of negationism, but the negationists take heart from any change of public mood that weakens the indignation over the Holocaust.

In this connection, there is also a perception that the Jewish-controlled press reduces the death toll of Nazism to the Jewish victims, omitting the Gypsies and the many millions of Polish, Ukrainian and Russian victims in work- camps and battlefields; and also omitting the victims of Allied war crimes (apart from Stalinism, these comprise the bombings of Dresden,

Hiroshima etc., and the several hundreds of thousands of German soldiers starved in Allied camps even after the end of the war, plus the crimes committed by real and fake resistance groups after the war). This way, in those circles where anti-Judaism in mild or strident form had been common, the old irritation with the Jews finds itself confirmed when the Holocaust memory is raked up once too often. The sacralization of the Holocaust paradoxically feeds negationism.

Considering what the Jewish people has gone through, I still find it unacceptable to say that Jews exploit the Holocaust memory. It is not of the Jews but of the leftists that one can say they are exploiting the Holocaust memory. After the fall of Soviet Communism, the trend to fill the media with reminders of the Holocaust, coupled with warnings that we should not let it happen again, has reached an unprecedented intensity. Never before have we seen so many documentaries of the Holocaust on TV. Worse, leftist journalists now routinely show film material of trains to Auschwitz while talking about present-day rightist parties that have emphatically distanced themselves from the rightism of the 1930s: a Goebbelsian use of the Holocaust.

The reason is obvious: after the loss of face which Gorbachov and Yeltsin have inflicted on them, they need an anti-Fascist fever as a new legitimation and as a distraction of the public's attention. The trial of the Communist Party in Moscow occasioned one revelation after another, e.g. about the Soviet financial support to front organizations in the West (such as the peace movement), but reporting has been scant. From our press coverage, you would get the impression that economic inefficiency was Communism's only crime. So many survivors of the Gulag camps can finally speak out, but instead we get to see Auschwitz survivors.

The collaborators with Stalinism in our press will go to any length to keep attention away from their own sins, and they have no scruples in using even the Holocaust victims as a cover. The public indignation with this shameless manipulation of the Holocaust memory by leftists is entirely justified. Fortunately (and unlike the opposition to the so-called Jewish Holocaust exploitation), this has not led to any signs of willingness to go to the other extreme, viz. to tolerate negationism. Still, the Holocaust negationists enjoy these transparent acts of desperation by the Gulag concealers.

A second factor which favours acceptance of negationism on some scale, is the martyrdom suffered by some negationists. The leading negationist Faurisson has been beaten up by a group of Jewish youngsters, sending him into hospital for weeks. Of course, an idea is not worth more simply because some fool has suffered for it, but the aura of martyrdom still has its effect. More generally, there is a sense of unfair treatment by the media and the judiciary.

For example, the French extreme-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has been convicted for saying on TV in 1987 that the gas chambers were merely a detail in history. Even his rightist colleagues trying for respectability disowned him: the Flemish Vlaams Blok leader Filip Dewinter announced that any party member found propagating negationism would be thrown out of the party, and the German Republikaner leader Franz Schoenhuber emphatically said that the Holocaust must not be minimized or denied, and that a renewed German self-respect should not be based on the denial of this horrible episode. However, Le Pen's supporters have pointed out that in the same interview he had clarified that by gas chamber he had only meant the method used for killing (which is indeed a minor issue), not the killing itself. In that case, it is not strictly true that he was guilty of negationism. However, in other contexts he has been very ambiguous about the issue, and most French negationists look up to him as their champion.

Because of the propaganda value of martyrdom, it is not surprising that there are indications of provocation: the negationists seem deliberately to provoke Jewish organizations and Holocaust survivors to file complaints, for the sake of publicity and for creating a martyrdom aura with the Jews once more in the role of the villains.

A new factor that may increase the audience of the negationists, is that with the fall of Communism, we now get to hear the voice of the Central-and East-European peoples, most of which have quite a record of collaboration with the Nazis. In the 1920s and 30s, the leader principle was in, and most of these countries had their own authoritarian rulers. When faced with a choice between Hitler and Stalin, they opted for Hitler. Many of these pro-Hitler leaders and militiamen were slaughtered by the Communists, making them national heroes whose memory has been cherished all through the Communist winter. Now that national history is being revived, these nations do not want to be stigmatized as accomplices in the Holocaust, because to

them, collaboration with Hitler had other motives than the extermination of the Jews. On the other hand, their regimes mostly did practise their own brand of anti-Judaism, and when the Jews were rounded up, they did not exactly obstruct these Holocaust preparations. Still, for a fair assessment of the Hitler- Stalin period, these nations would prefer to see some other dimensions highlighted than just the Holocaust, to which it is too often reduced. Moreover, the anti-Fascist propaganda which they were fed under Communist rule had equally de- emphasized the Jews and emphasized the Communists as targets of Nazi persecution. Some Holocaust-denying voices have already been raised in these countries.

In spite of somewhat favourable circumstances and of their own clever manipulations, the negationists are bound to fail. Thus, in 1991 the Spanish Supreme Court has convicted Leon Degrelle, a veteran pro-Nazi leader from Belgium living in exile in Spain, for his describing the Nazi genocide as "a Jewish fabrication", and similar negationist statements. Spain has no law against negationism, but Violeta Friedman, a Jewish-Hungarian survivor of the Nazi camps (in which her parents were killed) invoked the ordinary laws against slanderous publications. Lower courts ruled that an individual cannot claim to be the victim of slander. But the Supreme Court ruled in her favour, and prohibited further public denials of the Holocaust.

Similarly, in the 1991 elections for the post of governor of Louisiana, the Republican candidate David Duke had been an advocate of negationism. Now he disclaims this position, but certain sins remain unforgivable for very long. President Bush, even though himself a Republican, advised the voters to elect the Democratic candidate, because: "I think that someone who has denied the Holocaust, should not ever be allowed to take a leadership position."

The president did not deny Mr. Duke the freedom to voice his negationist position, nor did he try to prevent his standing for elections, but he made it clear that he rejected this shameless falsehood of negationism, even at the cost of his own party's immediate interest.

These incidents should make it clear that negationism is simply not accepted. It is useful to keep this determined rejection in mind as a standard when considering other negationisms. Some of them are championed by

governments and intellectuals even though they are just as objectionable as Holocaust negationism.

1.3 LEFTIST NEGATIONISM

In the late 1970s, the negationists found an unexpected ally when some French leftists, grouped around Pierre Guillaume and his publishing-house La Vieille Taupe, took up their defence. Within the Left wing of French (let alone European) politics, this is an insignificant fringe group, but the reasons for their support to negationism are interesting.

The more immediate reason for leftist negationism is the current leftist support to the Palestinian cause. The sacralization of the Holocaust as the foundation myth of the Israeli state goes hand in hand with attempts to strengthen the struggle against Israeli policies by denying the Holocaust. Even quite apart from negationism, the extreme Left has been the first to break the taboo on estimating the Jewish death toll in the Holocaust at less than 6 million. After glasnost, the authorities in Poland have declared that according to their first-hand information, the death toll in Auschwitz was only 1.5 million, less than 1 million of them Jews. The earlier official version had been 4 million, while Jewish organizations had assumed it was some 2 million. At any rate, if the Polish authorities have given correct figures, and the Auschwitz number is decreased, then the total Holocaust death toll must also be decreased to less than 6 million. The most reliable sources now agree on around 5.3 million as the total count of Jewish victims of Nazism. But somehow no one dares to amend the established number of 6 million, for fear of being branded a negationist. It was in the Belgian Marxist-Leninist (and strongly pro-Palestinian) weekly *Solidair* that I read for the first time that "5.1 million Jews" had been killed by the Nazis.

But here we are not dealing with small corrections in the figures, but with a fundamental denial of the Holocaust itself. Unlike most Marxists, the ones under consideration have taken their support to the Palestinian cause as far as denying what they consider the cornerstone of the "greater Israel" ideology, viz. the Holocaust memory.

The deeper reason for leftist negationism is that the extreme hostility between Nazism and Jews regardless of their class, is in conflict with Marxist theory. Of course, rivalry and even war between capitalists (Jewish vs. German capitalists, German vs. French-British colonial capitalists, etc.)

does fit the theory. But the Nazi plan to destroy all the Jews is a different matter, outside the grip of Marxist theory. Marxists define Fascism as merely an extreme phase of capitalism, just like imperialism and colonialism were necessary phases of capitalism. Already in 1953, some Trotskyites had made the analysis that the Holocaust was a extremely useful propaganda instrument for Anglo-American capitalism to differentiate itself from its fascist twin- brother. Thanks to the Holocaust, the capitalists could impress upon the minds that there was a radical difference between Fascism, which had committed the Holocaust, and democracy, which had fought Fascism and stopped the Holocaust. This covers up the reality that Fascist and democratic capitalism are merely two faces of the same monster. The people's struggle should be directed against the Fascist phase of capitalism (which amounts to collaboration with the non-Fascist phase of capitalism), but should be against capitalism as such, without getting confused by intra- capitalist family struggles between Anglo-American and Axis capitalists.

In a sense, the fact of the holocaust escaped Marxist theory as understood by the La Vieille Taupe group. So that was too bad for the fact: it had to be denied. As Alain Finkielkraut has commented, the Holocaust was "an event too many", and the dogmatic Marxists chose "for doctrinal faithfulness and against the complexity of the facts".

Interestingly, these leftist negationists integrated the more conventional Marxist explanation for anti-Judaism, viz. the scapegoat theory. They accept that until 1945 the Jews were a scapegoat held up by the capitalists in order to channel the proletariat's discontent away from its proper target, capitalism (in accordance with this view, Franz Neumann had predicted in 1942 in his analysis of Nazism that the extermination of the Jews was excluded because of their political importance as scapegoat). But in and since 1945, it is the fascists who have been turned into a kind of scapegoat: they are blackened and covered with contempt in order to channel discontent away from its proper target, viz. capitalism as the culprit for everything, towards this one particular form of capitalism, which was already neutralized and no longer useful anyway. The Holocaust is merely a dummy created by capitalism to distract socialist combattivity and to instill in the supporters of Anglo- American capitalism a sense of moral superiority.

This leftist denial of the Holocaust fact is apparently an aberration from what was originally a justifiable (within Marxist theory) critique of the use of the Holocaust fact as an alibi for Anglo-American capitalism.

A cornerstone of the leftist-negationist argument is the testimony immediately after the war, and the books written later by Paul Rassinier, a socialist who had survived the Nazi camps, though handicapped. This embittered man had depicted the Holocaust as nothing but a propagandistic concoction. As an authentic leftist and victim of Nazism, he was the perfect witness for the negationist position. Those who can keep the proper over-all perspective, will be able to make the unpleasant but inescapable judgement that Paul Rassinier had projected his own experience in Buchenwald (where no Jews were gassed) as a general description of the events in the Nazi camps. I do not want to judge too harshly on a man who went through such suffering, but the armchair historians who selectively highlighted his version because it was useful to them, are a different matter. Lifting a few convenient but untypical testimonies out of the enormous corpus of evidence is a wellknown method of distorting the picture.

For the rest, the leftist-negationist argument is a pitiable list of contradictions and bad reasoning. For instance, one of their stalwarts, Vincent Monteil, writes that "a large-scale genocide is impossible without gas chambers, and therefore no genocide has taken place": even if we allow for his presupposition that the gas chambers have already been exposed as a myth, it is quite stupid to assume that in the absence of gas chambers, those who intend to commit genocide could not find alternative tools (which would declare most historical cases of genocide impossible).

Leftist negationism regarding the Nazi holocaust is of course only a footnote in the much more general negationism practised by most leftists, hard and soft, regarding the crimes of Communist regimes. So many fellow-travellers visited the Soviet Union, closed their eyes for inconvenient facts, wilfully believed only what their official guide told them, and propagated a rosy picture of Stalin's brave achievements. Many social-democrat leaders from the West regularly went to Moscow for consultations, and started friendship associations with Communist countries, to spread a more unprejudiced picture of their regimes. Even today, some of them declare that they don't regret this stab in the back of those countries' oppressed populations. When in 1989 the Soviet authorities finally admitted

Stalin's guilt in the Katyn massacre, I have not heard any of the Soviet supporters outside the Soviet bloc apologizing for propagating the Katyn lie until recently.

A well-known early case of Communist negationism put on trial, was the Kravchenko affair. In 1944 Viktor Kravchenko had escaped from the Soviet Union, and in his book "I chose freedom" (1946) he exposed Stalinist repression. French Communists decried his testimony as a CIA concoction, but Kravchenko charged them with slander. In court, testimonies by Gulag (Russian acronym: "chief bureau of camps") camp survivors were countered by fellow-travellers, who alleged that any claims contradicting their own impressions were mere Cold War propaganda. But Kravchenko won his case.

In 1949, David Rousset, who had survived the Nazi camps, invited other camp survivors to support his appeal to have the Soviet camps investigated as well. When he published the Soviet "code of forced labour", it was too much for the communists, and they accused him of having fabricated all his information. Rousset alleged slander and won his case. In his standard work on negationism, "De Uitbuiting van de Holocaust" ("The Exploitation of the Holocaust", from which I have borrowed much of the information for this chapter), the Flemish scholar Gie van den Berghe observes about the Rousset trial: "The mass of evidence could not convince the Gulag deniers. They used the same arsenal of arguments which the negationists use today... Testimonies of escaped prisoners were rejected as mystifications, and fellow-travellers effortlessly concluded, from the fact that they had not seen the Gulag camps, that these could not exist." What makes this communist negationism worse, is that it took place even while, in the camps of the Gulag archipelago, the crime was still being committed

The leading leftist intellectuals Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty joined the public debate surrounding the Rousset trial. They acknowledged that Stalin's camps had inspired Hitler who merely had to add the technical novelty of the gas chambers. Yet they refused to denounce the Soviet camps because the Soviets acted in good faith, deserved the benefit of the doubt, and were in any case the lesser evil compared to a counter-revolution in the fatherland of socialism. They denounced Rousset as a man blinded by hatred and objectively feeding Cold War propaganda.

As Sartre's position (to which he stuck even when Merleau-Ponty grew away from Communism, and even after he himself broke with the Parti Communiste) shows, some people don't feel the need to deny crimes against humanity because they consider them justified. This is not abnormal if you have the proper viewpoint, like Sartre's formula: "Every anti-Communist is a dog". Till today, die-hard Communists defend Stalin's, Brezhnev's, Mao's and Pol pot's massacres. Often they combine this with a minor negationism, alleging that the figures have been exaggerated and at least some of the crimes fabricated by the CIA.

Thus, in his analysis of the Gorbachov revolution: "USSR, de Fluwelen Contrarevolutie", Ludo Martens, president of the minuscule Belgian Marxist-Leminst party, writes that Stalin's crimes were partly inevitable mistakes, partly Western concoction and fantasy, and partly justified. For this unrepentant Stalinist, Stalin's terror against the Kulaks was a necessary and justified class struggle. In his party paper Solidair, he has argued that the organized famines in Ukraine had been a piece of Hitlerian propaganda. He used a familiar negationist technique: create suspicion about one of the sources reporting the facts (viz. Randolph Hearst's news agency, which had signed an agreement with Hitler for exclusive rights to sell international news), keep other sources out of the picture, and suggest that the facts have only existed in this one source's version.

Another stalwart of the same party, Dr. Kris Merckx, goes one step further. In reply to an article about the Marxist double standards by the philosopher Prof. Etienne Vermeersch, he denies that Stalin committed massacres: "Etienne Vermeersch...writes about the mass murderer Stalin. Immediately after World War 2, this gossip was only believed among Nazi collaborators... In those days, people still knew that the first stories about millions of people killed by Lenin and Stalin had been launched by a certain Adolf Hitler. In 1926... Hitler wrote: In Russia the Jew went around with truly fanatical ferocity. He killed about 30 million people, partly by inhuman torture, partly by organized famine. These and other lies have not withstood the test of World War 2. The Soviet nations have inflicted the decisive defeat on the Nazis.. because they identified with the socialist regime and were willing to bring the greatest sacrifices for it. This would not have happened if the regime had meant terror and oppression for them.

And yet, in our media and schools, people speak of the mass- murderer Stalin without blinking."

The editors of the paper (Humo 19/11/1992) reply: "Whatever nonsense Hitler may have written about the Soviet Union in 1926, at that time Stalin was only just beginning to build his reputation of paranoid dictator... His forced collectivization and the great purification (which reached its peak in 1934-38) created a wave of terror in the Soviet Union. Reducing Stalin's disgraceful reputation to Hitler's mendacious demagogy, is itself a crass case of demagogy, and an insult for the many (including sincere communists) who later became Stalin's victims."

About the heroism of the Soviet people's patriotic resistance in spite of Stalinism: "It is true that Stalin had reduced his terror to a milder level, and his share in victory should not be minimized, but the Nazis' defeat does not erase his crimes. The great combattivity of the Soviet nations need not - considering the Nazi atrocities in Russia - be reduced to the general popular reverence for Stalin that you suggest. By your logic, Napoleon's Russian defeat proves that the people all venerated the Czar. You are right in remarking tht Prof. Vermeersch's list [of crimes against humanity] is not complete, but then, neither is yours. That is all the more deplorable because Stalin still has a model role in your vision of the future. At the last May Day celebration, the Marxist-Leninist party president Ludo Martens has said in so many words that the choice of the future will ultimately be one between Hitler and Stalin."

It should be borne in mind that the number of people killed by the Soviet regime between 1917 and 1985 is estimated at between 34 million (on the basis of official figures) and 67 million (according to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn). In the same order of magnitude we find Tse-tung's number of victims (some 30 million), during the communist take-over, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Till today, there is a Chinese Gulag archipelago in the occupied territories of Tibet (including Chinghai), East-Turkestan and Inner Mongolia. Over a million Tibetans have died because of Communist massacres and organized famines; forced sterilizations (which the 1948 UN convention on genocide considers a full-blooded act of genocide) have taken place on a proportionately large scale. But this is hotly denied or at least strongly minimized by the regime and its supporters abroad.

Like the Holocaust negationists, our Communist negationists prefer to de-emphasize the real issue, and to draw the attention towards fault-finding with the victims, and towards the aggressor's glorious achievements. Thus the old system in Tibet was an obscurantist, archfeudal, even cannibalist theocracy, and the Tibetans have been lucky to be forced into enjoying the benefits of Maoism. While the communist version of pre-communist history (defended abroad by A.T. Grunfeld in: *The Making of Modern Tibet*) is a grim caricature, it is true that Tibetan society needed social as well as material modernization; but this does not justify the occupation of the country, any more than it would justify the European colonization (which had equally been advertised as a generous act of helping the natives to modernize). Non-colonized Japan adopted modernization much faster and more smoothly than any colonized country, and left to itself, the modernization which had already been started by the 13th Dalai Lama would certainly have picked up momentum over the years and done a lot more good to Tibet than any colonization could. At any rate, none of these considerations anyhow justifies the gradual genocide which the Chinese occupiers have been carrying out in Tibet.

Like the Holocaust negationists, our Communist negationists are very inventive when it comes to explaining away inconvenient facts. In 1989, when journalist and Tibet-lover Frans Boenders had reported how he had heard a long round of shooting from his hotel room in Lhasa, the president of the Belgo-Chinese Friendship Association dismissed the report, saying that Mr. Boenders, because of his lack of familiarity with local culture, had mistaken festive fireworks for gunfire. Some months later, a defecting Chinese official revealed that 1988-89 had been a time of intense repression in Tibet, including a razzia with 460 people killed in April 1989.

So far, the collapse of Soviet Communism has not triggered any audible soul-searching among its erstwhile supporters. The small minority which sticks to Marxist orthodoxy, thinks it has nothing to apologize for. Among those who had believed in Communism (like myself, briefly) but turned away from it long before Gorbachov, many have spoken out clearly and forcefully against this criminal system (e.g. the actor-couple Yves Montand and Simone Signoret, and the nouveaux philosophes like Andre Glucksmann). But among those who stayed with Communism until the accomplished facts overtook them, the attitude is more one of quietly

passing on to the middle-ground of social and political life, with a minimum of comment on this counter-revolution which Marx had not foreseen. In Europe, these ex-Communists are presently trying to hijack the Green (ecologist) movement, dropping some of their Marxist rhetoric in the process, but still retaining a lot of the Marxist agenda (even while Communist rule has brought about the biggest ecological disasters).

The ones least influenced by the collapse of Communism are the soft-leftists, such as Christians for socialism and liberation theologians: even after Gorbachov, they kept on passing resolutions demanding the abolition of private property, and organizing peace demonstrations directed solely against the US, as if they had never heard of Li Peng or Saddam Hussein. On the negationist front they will not deny historical facts too openly but they continue to quietly ignore them. Just like before Gorbachov, when they paid their respects to the Soviet system and ignored the persecution of their co-religionists as a minor aberration, they still refuse to pay attention to the decades of persecution, and they still denounce anti-Communist statements as anti-progressive Cold War rhetoric, etc. Lazy-minded people who have acquired a leftist bias after long-term uncritical consumption of propaganda, will not shake off their thought-habits until the same stigma attaches to Communism as to Fascism.

1.4 ISLAMIC NEGATIONISM

One party which could have an interest in Holocaust negationism, is the Palestinian people. I do not know of an official negationism in the Palestinian Liberation Organization, but in conversation with Palestinians abroad I have heard negationist positions more than once. Even if Palestinians do not want to deny the Holocaust, at least they argue that this topic should take a back seat for a while, because now it is being kept alive artificially in order to underpin Israel's claim on the Palestinian homeland.

In the Arab world at large, there has occasionally been official support for negationism. In 1976, the Saudi representative at the U.N. denied in a speech that the Holocaust had occurred. Hussein Sumaida, the young Iraqi spy who recently defected, has written in his memoirs how in school he had never learned of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis, but all the more about the Jewish conspiracy and about the great realizations of Hitler's Third Reich.

I would not make too much of the great admiration which Fascism had evoked among the Muslims, as among many Third World populations. It is true the Baath Party in Syria and Iraq was modelled on Mussolini's Fascist Party. Sir Mohammed Iqbal has written a eulogy for Mussolini. The Yugoslavian Muslims collaborated with the fascist regime in Croatia, and their grand-mufti exhorted them to serve in the Fascist Ustasha militia. Muslim nations (Tatars, Kalmuks, Balkars, Chechens, Ingoosh) in the Soviet Union fought alongside the Nazi invader. The grand-mufti of Jerusalem made a pact with Hitler, if only because he too had wanted to get rid of the Jews once and for all. But let us assume that all that happened because they didn't realize the ultimate consequences of Nazism, or because colonized people had no reason to believe the anti-Fascist war propaganda put out by the colonial powers, themselves veterans of many a massacre. Even then, there is a lot of post-war writing in the Islamic world which restates the Nazi propaganda against the Jews, and for that, there is no longer an excuse.

In the first 1989 issue of Islamic Order, a quarterly published in Karachi, there is an article by Ausaf Saied Vasfi, titled Beware Arafat Beware. It is published "courtesy Radiance, Delhi", which means at least two English-

language Islamic papers have published it; and it is by no means the only article of its kind which is currently being fed to the Muslim public. The article states that the sources of Zionism are chiefly these two: the Talmud and the Protocols of the Sages of Zion.

The Talmud is of course the chief Jewish scripture, a comment on the Tenakh (Old Testament), and forms a decisive reorientation of the Jewish religion: a pluralistic interpretation of the Biblical texts, recognizing that each interpretation (including the literal one) is always a limited human attempt to understand the unlimited profundity of God's word, and allowing for different levels of understanding (literal, hermeneutical, allegorical, mystical). In the Talmud, Judaism transcends in substantial measure its exclusivistic origins (which would unfortunately be re-actualized by Christianity and Islam), and develops the typical emphasis on intellectual investigation which will make the Jewish community such a cradle of powerful minds.

But the starting thing about Mr. Vasfi's article is that he presents the Protocols of the Sages of Zion as a source of Jewish inspiration, apparently ignoring the well-known fact that it was nothing but a forgery made by the Czar's secret police in order to underpin the theory of a Jewish conspiracy to control the world. In all seriousness, he tries to prove the Jewish world conspiracy with quotes from the Protocols, like this one: "And the weapons in our hands are limitless: ambitions, burning greediness, merciless vengeance, hatred and malice... It is from us that the all- engulfing terror proceeds... By these acts all states are in torture... We will not give them peace until they openly acknowledge our international Super-Government and with submissiveness."

Mr. Vasfi lists the occasions when Jews have been banished from countries, and comments with a rhetorical question: "The question is: why?" And then he recounts the story of the successive confrontations between Mohammed and the Jews of Medina, which proves the Jews' propensity to mischief. And they have remained mischievous: the Kemalist revolution in Turkey which brought down the khilafat "was planned and executed by the International Jewry", and "the entire Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was engineered by the Jews". It should be made clear that such sweeping allegations are nothing but the well-known stock-in-trade of anti-Judaism.

In late 1992, Western negationist groups had announced a negationist conference, due to take place in Sweden. The Swedish government prohibited the initiative. Among the participants: the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas, two Iranian-backed Islamic organizations.

Saudi Arabia is the chief sponsor of negationist activity in the West. The American negationist author William Grimstad has been exposed as being on the Saudi secret service's payroll. In 1981, his books, including *Antizion* and *The Six Million Reconsidered*, were sent, along with other negationist literature, to one thousand British political and business leaders, by the Rabita, the Islamic World Council, from Pakistan. The Iranian embassies are also distribution centres of negationist and anti-Jewish material

In her otherwise meritorious book "The Holocaust Denial" , the British leftist authoress Gill Seidel concludes a list of Islamic-sponsored negationist initiatives with the remark that "of course there is nothing intrinsically anti-Semitic to Islam as a religion". That is evidently the Marxist perception propagated by Maxime Rodinson, but it is historically inaccurate. Mohammed had all the Jews in his domain banished, enslaved or killed. After that, the Jews outside Arabia were allowed to survive under a number of humiliating conditions. They were kept down and exploited, and there were frequent pogroms, as described by Bat Ye'or in her book "The Dhimmi". They were the target of Islamic hatred simply because they rejected Islam, but also for a more specific reason: they had deleted from their revealed Scripture all references to Mohammed, the future and final prophet.

Apart from the complicity of Muslims in Holocaust negationism, there is a far more pervasive participation of Muslims in a different negationism which concerns Islam directly. In Turkey most people, from the top down, deny the genocide on the Armenians during World War 1 (Which Hitler invoked as a precedent of successful, unpunished genocide). The general who led the operations against the Armenians has a statue in Ankara. This genocide had been declared a jihad by the last caliph, who had fullest authority to make such declarations.

In 1974, the Turkish representative in the U.N. Human Rights Committee demanded the scrapping of the paragraph (in the preparatory report on the prevention and punishment of genocide) referring in diplomatic terms to the

Armenian genocide. As Turkey is a cornerstone of the NATO alliance, it manages to get a lot of passive Western support for its attempts to whitewash its own past. The paragraph was scrapped, and the document now only refers to the Nazi genocide. But in recent years, both the U.N. and the European Parliament have adopted resolutions condemning the Armenian genocide, which the Turkish government has angrily kept on denying.

In the next chapter we shall see that the Armenian genocide was by far not the only crime against humanity committed by Islam, nor the only one which is now being hotly denied in a campaign of negationist propaganda.

CHAPTER TWO - NEGATIONISM IN INDIA

The negationism regarding the Nazi crimes has been the object of much public discussion. Turkish negationism about the Armenian genocide has received some attention. Less well-known is that India has its own brand of negationism.

Since about 1920 an effort has been going on in India to rewrite history and to deny the millennium-long attack of Islam on Hinduism. Today, most politicians and English- writing intellectuals in India will go out of their way to condemn any public reference to this long and painful conflict in the strongest terms. They will go to any length to create the illusion of a history of communal amity between Hindus and Muslims.

2.1 HINDU VS. MUSLIM

Making people believe in a history of Hindu-Muslim amity is not an easy task: the number of victims of the persecutions of Hindus by Muslims is easily of the same order of magnitude as that of the Nazi extermination policy, though no one has yet made the effort of tabulating the reported massacres and proposing a reasonable estimate of how many millions exactly must have died in the course of the Islamic campaign against Hinduism (such research is taboo). On top of these there is a similar number of abductions and deportations to harems and slave-markets, as well as centuries of political oppression and cultural destruction.

The American historian Will Durant summed it up like this: "The Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilization is a precious good, whose delicate complex of order and freedom, culture and peace, can at any moment be overthrown by barbarians invading from without or multiplying within."

Only off and on did this persecution have the intensity of a genocide, but it was sustained much longer and spread out much wider geographically than the Nazi massacre. Whereas the Germans including most members of the Nazi party, were horrified at the Nazi crimes against humanity within a few years, the Muslims, for whom Gott mit uns (God with us) was not a slogan but a religious certainty, managed to keep a good conscience for centuries. We will encounter similarities as well as differences between Nazi and Islamic crimes against humanity, but the most striking difference is definitely the persistence with which Islamic persecutions have continued for 14 centuries. This is because it had more spine, a more powerful psychological grip on its adherents than Nazism.

The ideological foundation of the Islamic campaign was similar to the Nazi ideology. The Muslim invaders (as we can read in numerous documents which they left us, from the Quran and the Hadith onwards) distinguished between three kinds of people: first of all the Muslims, the Herrenvolk (master nation) to which Allah had promised the world; secondly the Jews and Christians, who could live on under Muslim rule but only as third-class citizens, just like the Slavic Untermenschen (inferior people) in Hitler's

planned new order, thirdly the species to be eliminated, the real Pagans who had to disappear from the face of the earth.

Different from Hitler's victims, the non-combatants among the unbelievers often got a chance to opt for conversion rather than death. What Mohammed (imitated by his successors) wanted, was his recognition as God's final prophet, so he preferred people to live and give him this recognition (by pronouncing the Islamic creed, i.e. converting), and only those who refused him this recognition were to be killed. Still, conversion often came too late to save defeated Pagans from slavery. At this point, Mohammed deserves comparison with Stalin: unlike Hitler, he killed people not for their race but for their opinions. But one can hardly say that the one totalitarianism is better than the other.

The Blitzkrieg of the Muslim armies in the first decades after the birth of their religion had such enduring results precisely because the Pagan populations in West- and Central-Asia had no choice (except death) but to convert. Whatever the converts' own resentment, their children grew up as Muslims and gradually identified with this religion. Within a few generations the initial resistance against these forcible conversions was forgotten, and these areas became heidenfrei (free from Pagans, cfr. judenfrei). In India it didn't go like that, because the Muslims needed five centuries of attempts at invasion before they could catch hold of large parts of India, and even then they encountered endless resistance, so that they often had to settle for a compromise.

The Muslim conquests, down to the 16th century, were for the Hindus a pure struggle of life and death. Entire cities were burnt down and the populations massacred, with hundreds of thousands killed in every campaign, and similar numbers deported as slaves. Every new invader made (often literally) his hills of Hindus skulls. Thus, the conquest of Afghanistan in the year 1000 was followed by the annihilation of the Hindu population; the region is still called the Hindu Kush, i.e. Hindu slaughter. The Bahmani sultans (1347-1480) in central India made it a rule to kill 100,000 captives in a single day, and many more on other occasions. The conquest of the Vijayanagar empire in 1564 left the capital plus large areas of Karnataka depopulated. And so on.

As a contribution to research on the quantity of the Islamic crimes against humanity, we may mention Prof. K.S.Lal's estimates about the population figures in medieval India (Growth of Muslim Population in India).

According to his calculations, the Indian (subcontinent) population decreased by 80 million between 1000 (conquest of Afghanistan) and 1525 (end of Delhi Sultanate). More research is needed before we can settle for a quantitatively accurate evaluation of Muslim rule in India, but at least we know for sure that the term crime against humanity is not exaggerated.

But the Indian Pagans were far too numerous and never fully surrendered. What some call the Muslim period in Indian history, was in reality a continuous war of occupiers against resisters, in which the Muslim rulers were finally defeated in the 18th century. Against these rebellious Pagans the Muslim rulers preferred to avoid total confrontation, and to accept the compromise which the (in India dominant) Hanifite school of Islamic law made possible. Alone among the four Islamic law schools, the school of Hanifa gave Muslim rulers the right not to offer the Pagans the sole choice between death and conversion, but to allow them toleration as zimmi (protected ones) living under 20 humiliating conditions, and to collect the jizya (toleration tax) from them. Normally the zimmi status was only open to Jews and Christians (and even that concession was condemned by jurists of the Hanbalite school like Ibn Taymiya), which explains why these communities have survived in Muslim countries while most other religions have not. On these conditions some of the higher Hindu castes could be found willing to collaborate, so that a more or less stable polity could be set up. Even then, the collaboration of the Rajputs with the Moghul rulers, or of the Kayasthas with the Nawab dynasty, one became a smooth arrangement when enlightened rulers like Akbar (whom orthodox Muslims consider an apostate) cancelled these humiliating conditions and the jizya tax.

It is because of Hanifite law that many Muslim rulers in India considered themselves exempted from the duty to continue the genocide on the Hindus (self-exemption for which they were persistently reprimanded by their mullahs). Moreover, the Turkish and Afghan invaders also fought each other, so they often had to ally themselves with accursed unbelievers against fellow Muslims. After the conquests, Islamic occupation gradually lost its character of a total campaign to destroy the Pagans. Many Muslim rulers preferred to enjoy the revenue from stable and prosperous kingdoms,

and were content to extract the jizya tax, and to limit their conversion effort to material incentives and support to the missionary campaigns of sufis and mullahs (in fact, for less zealous rulers, the jizya was an incentive to discourage conversions, as these would mean a loss of revenue). The Moghul dynasty (from 1526 onwards) in effect limited its ambition to enjoying the zimma system, similar to the treatment of Jews and Christians in the Ottoman empire. Muslim violence would thenceforth be limited to some slave-taking, crushing the numerous rebellions, destruction of temples and killing or humiliation of Brahmins, and occasional acts of terror by small bands of raiders. A left-over from this period is the North-Indian custom of celebrating weddings at midnight: this was a safety measure against the Islamic sport of bride-catching.

The last jihad against the Hindus before the full establishment of British rule was waged by Tipu Sultan at the end of the 18th century. In the rebellion of 1857, the near-defunct Muslim dynasties (Moghuls, Nawabs) tried to curry favour with their Hindu subjects and neighbours, in order to launch a joint effort to re-establish their rule. For instance, the Nawab promised to give the Hindus the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid site back, in an effort to quench their anti-Muslim animosity and redirect their attention towards the new common enemy from Britain. This is the only instance in modern history when Muslims offered concessions to the Hindus; after that, all the concessions made for the sake of communal harmony were a one-way traffic from Hindu to Muslim.

After the British had crushed the rebellion of 1857, the Indian Muslims fell into a state of depression, increasing backwardness due to their refusal of British education, and nostalgia for the past. While the Hindu elites took to Western notions like secular nationalism, the Muslims remained locked up in their communal separateness. As soon as the British drew them into the political process (founding of Muslim League in 1906) in order to use them as a counter-weight against the Indian National Congress, they immediately made heavy and hurtful demands on the Hindus, such as the unlimited right to slaughter cows, and they started working for political separation. First they obtained separate electorates where Muslim candidates would only have to please Muslim voters, and later they would succeed in separating a Muslim state from India.

By the twenties, they took to the unscrupled use of muscle power in a big way, creating street riots and outright pogroms. If Hindus retaliated in kind, it was a welcome help in instilling the separate communal identity into the ordinary Muslim, who would have preferred to coexist with his Hindu neighbours in peace. By creating riots and provoking retaliatory violence, the Muslim League managed to swing the vast majority of the Muslim electorate towards supporting its demand for the partition of India. The roughly 600,000 victims of the violence accompanying the Partition were the price which the Muslim League was willing to pay for its Islamic state of Pakistan. While every Hindu and Muslim who took part in the violence is responsible for his own excesses, the over-all responsibility for this mass-slaughter lies squarely with the Muslim leadership.

After independence, the Islamic persecution of Hindus has continued in different degrees of intensity, in Pakistan, Bangla Desh and Kashmir (as well as heavy discrimination in Malaysia). This is not the place for detailing these facts, which the international media have been ignoring completely. What may cut short all denials of this continued pestering of Hindus in Muslim states, are the resulting migration figures: in 1948, Hindus formed 23% of the population of Bangla Desh (then East Pakistan), in 1971 the figure was down to 15%, and today it stands at about 8%. No journalist or human rights body goes in to ask the minority Hindus for their opinion about the treatment they get from the Muslim authorities and populations; but they vote with their feet.

In the first months of 1990, the entire Hindu population (about 2 lakhs) was forcibly driven from the Kashmir Valley, which used to be advertised as a showpiece of communal harmony. Muslim newspapers and mosque loudspeakers had warned the Hindus to leave the valley or face bullets. After the Islamic conquest of Kabul in April 1992, 50,000 Hindus had to flee Afghanistan (with the Indian government unwilling to extend help, and Inder Kumar Gujral denying that the expulsion of Indians had a communal motive). The pogroms in Pakistan and Bangladesh after the demolition of the Babri Masjid left 50,000 Hindus homeless in Bangladesh and triggered another wave of refugees from both countries towards India. In Pakistan, 245 Hindu temples were demolished, in Bangladesh a similar number was attacked, and even in England some temples were set on fire by Muslim

mobs. And then we haven't even mentioned the recurrent attacks on Hindu processions and on police stations.

It will now be evident that the Hindu psyche has very little sympathy for Islam. Doing something about this was the chief motive for negationism.

2.2 NEGATIONISM AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The political context of the first attempts at negationism was chiefly the attempt of the independence movement, led by the Indian National Congress, to eliminate all factors of disunity between Hindus and Muslims. It was the time of the Khilafat movement (1919-23), the agitation of Indian Muslims against the British take-over of the Islamic sacred places from the deceased Ottoman empire. The khilafatists demanded the restoration of the Ottoman caliph's authority over the sacred places. Congress saw in this the occasion to enlist the Muslims in the national freedom struggle against the same British imperialists.

This was a miscalculation: the khilafat movement intensified the Islamic sense of communal identity (therefore the rejection of Indian nationalism), and added considerably to Muslim separatism and the Pakistan ideology. But before 1923, when the Turks themselves abolished the caliphate so that the movement lost its *raison d'être* (and got transmuted into pogroms against the Hindus), there was great expectation in Congress circles. Therefore, Congress people were willing to go to any length to iron out the differences between Hindus and Muslims, including the invention of centuries of communal amity.

At that time, the Congress leaders were not yet actively involved in the rewriting of history. They were satisfied to quietly ignore the true history of Hindu-Muslim relations. After the communal riots of Kanpur in 1931, a Congress report advised the elimination of the mutual enemy- image by changing the contents of the history-books.

The next generation of political leaders, especially the left-wing that was to gain control of Congress in the thirties, and complete control in the fifties, would profess negationism very explicitly. The radical humanist (i.e. bourgeois Marxist) M.N. Roy wrote that Islam had fulfilled a historic mission of equality and abolition of discrimination, and that for this, Islam had been welcomed into India by the lower castes. If at all any violence had occurred, it was as a matter of justified class struggle by the progressive forces against the reactionary forces, meaning the feudal Hindu upper castes.

This is a modern myth springing from an incorrect and much too grim picture of the caste system, a back-projection of modern ideas of class struggle, and an uncritical swallowing of contemporary Islamic apologetics, which has incorporated some vogueish socialist values. There is no record anywhere of low-caste people welcoming the Muslims as liberators. Just like in their homeland, the Muslim generals had nothing but contempt for the common people, and all the more so because these were idolaters. They made no distinction between rich Pagans and poor Pagans: in the Quran, Allah had promised the same fate to all idolaters.

By contrast, there is plenty of testimony that these common people rose in revolt, not against their high-caste co-religionists, but against the Muslim rulers. And not only against heavy new taxes (50% of the land revenue for Alauddin Khilji, whom the negationists hail as the precursor of socialism) and land expropriations, but especially against the rape and abduction of women and children and the destruction of their idols, acts which have been recorded with so much glee by the Muslim chroniclers, without anywhere mentioning a separate treatment of Hindu rich and Hindu poor, upper-caste Kafir or low-caste Kafir. Even when some of the high-caste people started collaborating, the common people gave the invaders no rest, attacking them from hiding-places in the forests. The conversion of low-caste people only began when Muslim rulers were safely in power and in a position to reward and encourage conversion by means of tax discrimination, legal discrimination (win the dispute with your neighbour if you convert), handing out posts to converts, and simple coercion. Nevertheless, the myth which M.N. Roy spread, has gained wide currency.

The best-known propounder of negationism was certainly Jawaharlal Nehru. He was rather illiterate concerning Indian culture and history, so his admirers may invoke for him the benefit of doubt. At any rate, his writings contain some crude cases of glorification of Muslim tyrants and concealment or denial of their crimes. Witness his assessment of Mahmud Ghaznavi, who, according to his chronicler Utbi, sang the praise of the temple complex at Mathura and then immediately proceeded to destroy it. Nehru writes: "Building interested Mahmud, and he was much impressed by the city of Mathura near Delhi". About this he wrote: "There are here a thousand edifices as firm as the faith of the faithful; nor is it likely that this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of

dinars, nor could such another be constructed under a period of 200 years." And that is all: Nehru described the destroyer of Mathura as an admirer of Mathura, apparently without noticing the gory sarcasm in Ghaznavi's eulogy.

Moreover, Nehru denied that Mahmud had committed his acts of destruction out of any religious motive: "Mahmud was not a religious man. He was a Mohammedan, but that was just by the way. He was in the first place a soldier, and a brilliant soldier." That Mahmud was definitely a religious man, and that he had religious motives for his campaigns against the Hindus, is quite clear from Utbi's contemporary chronicle. Every night Mahmud copied from the Quran for the benefit of his soul. He risked his life several times for the sake of destroying and desecrating temples in which there was nothing to plunder, just to terrorize and humiliate the Pagans. In his campaigns, he never neglected to invoke the appropriate Quran verses. In venerating Mahmud as a pious hero of Islam, Indian Muslims are quite faithful to history: unlike Nehru, the ordinary Muslim refuses to practise negationism.

With Nehru, negationism became the official line of the Indian National Congress, and after Independence also of the Indian state and government.

2.3 THE ALIGARH SCHOOL

A second factor in the genesis of negationism was the penetration of Western ideas among a part of the Muslim elite, and especially the (in Europe newly emerged) positive valuation of tolerance. The Islamic elite was concentrated around two educational institutes, spearheads of the traditional and of the (superficially) westernizing trends among Indian Muslims. One was the theological academy at Deoband, the other the British-oriented Aligarh Muslim university.

The Deoband school was (and is) orthodox-Islamic, and rejected modern values like nationalism and democracy. It simply observed that India had once been a Dar-ul-Islam (house of Islam), and that therefore it had to be brought back under Muslim control. The fact that the majority of the population consisted of non-Muslims was not important: in the medieval Muslim empires the Muslims had not been in a majority either, and moreover, demography and conversion could yet transform the Muslim minority into a majority.

Among the scions of the Deoband school we find Maulana Maudoodi, the chief ideologue of modern fundamentalism. He opposed the Pakistan scheme and demanded the Islamization of all of British India. After independence, he settled in Pakistan and agitated for the full Islamization of the (still too British) polity. Shortly before his death in 1979, his demands were largely met when general Zia launched his Islamization policy.

Outsiders will be surprised to find that the same school of which Maudoodi was a faithful spokesman, also brought forth Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was Congress president for several terms and who was to become minister of Education in free India. Understandably but unjustifiably, Azad has often been described as a moderate and nationalist Muslim: he rejected the Partition of India and the foundation of Pakistan, not because he rejected the idea of a Muslim state, but because he wanted all of India to become a Muslim state in time.

When in the forties the Partition seemed unavoidable, Azad patronized proposals to preserve India's unity, stipulating that half of all members of parliament and of the government had to be Muslims (then 24% of the population), with the other half to be divided between Hindus,

Ambedkarites, Christians, and the rest. Short, a state in which Muslims would rule and non-Muslims would be second-class citizens electorally and politically. The Cabinet Mission Plan, proposed by the British as the ultimate sop for the Muslim League, equally promised an effective parity between Muslims and non-Muslims at the Central Government level and a veto right for the Muslim minority. Without Gandhiji's and other Congress leaders' knowing, Congress president Azad assured the British negotiators that he would get the plan accepted by the Congress. When he was caught in the act of lying to the Mahatma about the plan and his assurance, he lost some credit even among the naive Hindus who considered him a moderate. But he retained his position of trust in Nehru's cabinet, and continued his work for the ultimate transformation of India into a Muslim State.

Maulana Azad's pleas for Hindu-Muslim co-operation had an esoteric meaning, clear enough for Muslims but invisible for wilfully gullible non-Muslims like his colleagues in the Congress leadership. Azad declared that Hindu-Muslim co-operation was in complete conformity with the Prophet's vision, for "Mohammed had also made a treaty with the Jews of Madina". He certainly had, but the practical impact of this treaty was that within a few years, two of the three Jewish clans in Medina had been chased away, and the third clan had been massacred to the last man (the second clan had only been saved by the intervention of other Medinese leaders, for Mohammed had wanted to kill them too). Maulana Azad could mention Mohammed's treaty with the Jews as a model for Hindu-Muslim co-operation only because he was confident that few Hindus were aware of the end of the story, and that better-informed Hindus honoured a kind of taboo on criticism of Islam and its Prophet.

This parenthesis about Maulana Azad may help clear up some illusions which Hindus and Westerners fondly entertain about the possibility of Islamic moderacy. The Deoband school was as fundamentalist in its Azad face as it was in its Maudoodi heart, and its spokesmen had no problems with the horrors of Islamic history, nor did they make attempts to rewrite it. That Muslims had persecuted and massacred Hindus, counted as the fulfilment of Allah's salvation plan to transform the whole world into a Dar-ul-Islam. As Mohammed Iqbal wrote: "All land belongs to the Muslims, because it belongs to their God." (Iqbal would, however, end up in the Aligarh camp, cfr. infra) Maulana Azad shared this view of history. He

condemned Moghul emperor Akbar's tolerant rule as the near-suicide of Indian Islam, and praised fanatics like the theologian Ahmad Sirhindi, who through his opposition to Akbar's tolerance had brought the Moghul dynasty back on the right track of Hind-persecution.

Unlike the Deoband school, the Aligarh school tried to reconcile Islam with modern culture. It understood the principles of democracy and majority rule, and recognized that a modern democracy would be incompatible with the transformation of India into an Islamic state as long as Muslims only formed a minority. The tactical opposition against the disadvantageous system of democracy was underpinned ideologically by Mohammed Iqbal, who criticized it as a system in which heads are counted but not weighed. But Iqbal understood that democracy was the wave of the near future, and, together with more modern and sincerely democracy-minded people in the Muslim intelligentsia, he faced the logical consequence that the Muslims had to give up the ambition of gaining control over all of India immediately. Instead they should create a separate state out of the Muslim-majority areas of India: Pakistan. The ideal of Pakistan was launched by Iqbal in 1930, and in 1940 it became the official political goal of the Muslim League. Aligarh Muslim University has often been described as the cradle of Pakistan.

From their better knowledge of and appreciation for modern culture, the Aligarh thinkers accepted the modern value of religious tolerance. Not to the extent that they would be willing to co-exist with the Hindus in a single post-colonial state, but at least to this extent that they wanted to do something about the image of intolerance which Islam had come to carry. Around 1920 Aligarh historian Mohammed Habib launched a grand project to rewrite the history of the Indian religious conflict. The main points of his version of history are the following.

Firstly, it was not all that serious. One cannot fail to notice that the Islamic chroniclers (including some rulers who wrote their own chronicles, like Teimur and Babar) have described the slaughter of Hindus, the abduction of their women and children, and the destruction of their places of worship most gleefully. But, according to Habib, these were merely exaggerations by court poets out to please their patrons. One wonders what it says about Islamic rulers that they felt flattered by the bloody details which the Muslims chroniclers of Hindu persecutions have left us. At any rate, Habib

has never managed to underpin this convenient hypothesis with a single fact.

Secondly, that percentage of atrocities on Hindus which Habib was prepared to admit as historical, is not to be attributed to the impact of Islam, but to other factors. Sometimes Islam was used as a justification post factum, but this was deceptive. In reality economic motives were at work. The Hindus amassed all their wealth in temples and therefore Muslim armies plundered these temples.

Thirdly, according to Habib there was also a racial factor: these Muslims were mostly Turks, savage riders from the steppes who would need several centuries before getting civilized by the wholesome influence of Islam. Their inborn barbarity cannot be attributed to the doctrines of Islam.

Finally, the violence of the Islamic warriors was of minor importance in the establishment of Islam in India. What happened was not so much a conquest, but a shift in public opinion: when the urban working-class heard of Islam and realized it now had a choice between Hindu law (smṛti) and Muslim law (shariat), it chose the latter.

Mohammed Habib's excise in history-rewriting cannot stand the test of historical criticism on any score. We can demonstrate this with the example of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (997-1030), already mentioned, who carried out a number of devastating raids in Sindh, Gujrat and Punjab. This Ghaznavi was a Turk, certainly, but in many respects he was not a barbarian: he patronized arts and literature (including the great Persian poet Firdausi, who would end up in trouble because his patron suspected him of apostasy, and the Persian but Arabic-writing historian Albiruni) and was a fine calligraphist himself. The undeniable barbarity of his anti-Hindu campaigns cannot be attributed to his ethnic stock. His massacres and acts of destruction were merely a replay of what the Arab Mohammed bin Qasim had wrought in Sindh in 712-15. He didn't care for material gain: he left rich mosques untouched, but poor Hindu temples met the same fate at his hands as the richer temples. He turned down a Hindu offer to give back a famous idol in exchange for a huge ransom: "I prefer to appear on Judgement Day as an idol-breaker rather than an idol-seller." The one explanation that covers all the relevant facts, is that he was driven to his barbarous acts by his ideological allegiance to Islam.

There is no record of his being welcomed by urban artisans as a liberator from the oppressive Hindu social system. On the contrary, his companion Albiruni testifies how all the Hindus had an inveterate aversion for all Muslims.

Another ruler, Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1351-88), personally confirms that the destruction of Pagan temples was done out of piety, not out of greed: "The Hindus had accepted the zimmi status and the concomitant jizya tax in exchange for safety. But now they built idol temples in the city, in defiance of the Prophet's law which forbids such temples. Under divine leadership I destroyed these buildings, and killed the leaders of idolatry, and the common followers received physical chastisement, until this abomination had been banned completely." When Firuz heard that a Pagan festival was going on, he reacted forcefully: "My religious feelings exhorted me to finish off this scandal, this insult to Islam. On the day of the festival I went there myself, I ordered the execution of the leaders and practitioners of this abomination... I destroyed their idol temples and built mosques in their places."

The contention that Hindus stored their riches in temples is completely plucked out of thin air (though some of the richer temples contained golden statues, which were temple property): it is one among many ad hoc hypotheses which make Habib's theory a methodologically indefensible construction. In fact, Habib is proclaiming a grand conspiracy theory: all the hundreds of Islamic authors who declared unanimously that what they reported was a war of Islam against Infidelity, would all have co-ordinated one single fake scenario to deceive us.

This is not to say that the entire report which the Muslim chroniclers have left us, should be accepted at face value. For instance, writers like Ghaznavi's contemporary Utbi give the impression that the raids on, and ultimate conquest of Hindustan were a walk-over. Closer study of all the source material shows that the Muslim armies had a very tough time in India. From Muslim chronicles one only gets a faint glimpse of the intensity with which the Hindus kept on offering resistance, and of the precariousness of the Muslim grip on Hindistan through the Muslim period. The Muslim chroniclers have not been caught in the act of lying very often, but some of them distort the proportions of victory and defeat a bit. This is quite common among partisan historians everywhere, and a modern

historian knows how to take such minor distortions into account. The unanimous and entirely coherent testimony that the wars in Hindustan were religious wars of Muslims against Kafirs is a different matter altogether: denying this testimony is not a matter of small adjustments, but of replacing the well-attested historical facts with their diametrical opposite.

Habib tried to absolve the ideology (Islam) of the undeniable facts of persecution and massacre of the Pagans by blaming individuals (the Muslims). The sources however point to the opposite state of affairs: Muslim fanatics were merely faithful executors of Quranic injunctions. Not the Muslims are guilty, but Islam.

2.4 NEGATIONISM RAMPANT: THE MARXISTS

The Aligarh school has been emulated on a large scale. Soon its torch was taken over by Marxist historians, who were building a reputation for unscrupled history-rewriting in accordance with the party-line.

In this context, one should know that there is a strange alliance between the Indian Communist parties and the Muslim fanatics. In the forties the Communists gave intellectual muscle and political support to the Muslim League's plan to partition India and create an Islamic state. After independence, they successfully combined (with the tacit support of Prime minister Nehru) to sabotage the implementation of the constitutional provision that Hindi be adopted as national language, and to force India into the Soviet-Arab front against Israel. Ever since, this collaboration has continued to their mutual advantage as exemplified by their common front to defend the Babri Masjid, that symbol of Islamic fanaticism. Under Nehru's rule these Marxists acquired control of most of the educational and research institutes and policies.

Moreover, they had an enormous mental impact on the Congress apparatus: even those who formally rejected the Soviet system, thought completely in Marxist categories. They accepted, for instance, that religious conflicts can be reduced to economic and class contradictions. They also adopted Marxist terminology, so that they always refer to conscious Hindus as the communal forces or elements (Marxism dehumanizes people to impersonal pawns, or forces, in the hands of god History). The Marxist historians had the field all to themselves, and they set to work to decommunalize Indian history-writing, i.e. to erase the importance of Islam as a factor of conflict.

In *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*, Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, professors at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU, the Mecca of secularism and negationism) in Delhi, write that the interpretation of medieval wars as religious conflicts is in fact a back-projection of contemporary religious conflict artificially created for political purposes. In Bipan Chandra's famous formula, communalism is not a dinosaur, it is a strictly modern phenomenon. They explicitly deny that before the modern period there existed such a thing as Hindu identity or

Muslim identity. Conflicts could not have been between Hindus and Muslims, only between rulers or classes who incidentally also belonged to one religious community or the other. They point to the conflicts within the communities and to alliances across community boundaries.

It is of course a fact that some Hindus collaborated with the Muslim rulers, but that also counted for the British colonial rulers, who are for that no less considered as foreign oppressors. For that matter, in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw the Nazis employed Jewish guards, in their search for absconding Jews they employed Jewish informers, and in their policy of deportation they even sought the co-operation of the Zionist movement: none of this can disprove Nazi- Jewish enmity. It is also a fact that the Muslim rulers sometimes made war among each other, but that was equally true for Portuguese, French and British colonizers, who fought some wars on Indian territory: they were just as much part of a single colonial movement with a common colonial ideology, and all the brands of colonialism were equally the enemies of the Indian freedom movement. Even in the history of the Crusades, that paradigm of religious war, we hear a lot of battles between one Christian-Muslim coalition and another: these do not falsify the over-all characterization of the Crusades as a war between Christians and Muslims (triggered by the destruction of Christian churches by Muslims).

After postulating that conflicts between Hindus and Muslims as such were non-existent before the modern period, the negationists are faced with the need to explain how this type of conflict was born after centuries of a misunderstood non-existence. The Marxist explanation is a conspiracy theory: the separate communal identity of Hindus and Muslims is an invention of the sly British colonialists. They carried on a divide and rule policy, and therefore they incited the communal separateness. As the example par excellence, prof. R.S. Sharma mentions the 19th -century 8-volume work by Elliott and Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its own Historians*. This work does indeed paint a very grim picture of Muslim hordes who attack the Pagans with merciless cruelty. But this picture was not a concoction by the British historians: as the title of their work says, they had it all from indigenous historiographers, most of them Muslims.

Yet, the negationist belief that the British newly created the Hindu-Muslim divide has become an article of faith with everyone in India who calls himself a secularist. It became a central part of the negationist argument in

the debate over the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid issue. Time and again, the negationist historians (including Bipan Chandra, K.N. Panikkar, S. Gopal, Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia, Irfan Habib, R.S. Sharma, Gyanendra Pandey, Sushil Srivastava, Asghar Ali Engineer, as well as the Islamic politician Syed Shahabuddin) have asserted that the tradition according to which the Babri mosque forcibly replaced a Hindu temple, is nothing but a myth purposely created in the 19th century. To explain the popularity of the myth even among local Muslim writers in the 19th century, most of them say it was a deliberate British concoction, spread in the interest of the divide and rule- policy. They affirm this conspiracy scenario without anyhow citing, from the copious archives which the British administration in India has left behind, any kind of positive indication for their convenient hypothesis - let alone the rigorous proof on which a serious historian would base his assertions, especially in such controversial questions.

They have kept on taking this stand even after five documents by local Muslims outside the British sphere in the 19th century, two documents by Muslim officials from the early 18th century, and two documents by European travellers from the 18th and 17th century, as well as the extant revenue records, all confirming the temple destruction scenario, were brought to the public's notice in 1990. In their pamphlets and books, the negationists simply kept on ignoring most or all of this evidence, defiantly disregarding historical fact as well as academic deontology.

Concerning the Ayodhya debate, it is worth recalling that the negationists have also resorted to another tactic so familiar to our European negationists, and to all defenders of untenable positions: personal attacks on their opponents, in order to pull the public's attention away from the available evidence. In December 1990, the leading JNU historians and several allied scholars, followed by the herd of secularist penpushers in the Indian press, have tried to raise suspicions against the professional honesty of Prof. B.B. Lal and Dr. S.P. Gupta, the archaeologists who have unearthed evidence for the existence of a Hindu temple at the Babri Masjid site. Rebuttals by these two and a number of other archaeologists have received coverage in the secularist press.

In February 1991, Irfan Habib gave his infamous speech to the Aligarh Muslim University historians, in which he made personal attacks on the

scholars who took part in the government-sponsored debate on Ayodhya in defence of the Hindu claim, and on Prof. B.B. Lal. In this case, the weekly Sunday did publish a lengthy reply by the deputy superintending archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India, A.K. Sinha. The contents of this reply are very relevant, but it is a bit technical (i.e. not adapted to the medium of a weekly for the general public) and written in clumsy English, which gives a poor over-all impression.

Actually, I speculate that the Sunday-editor may well have selected it for publication precisely because of these flaws. The practice is well-known in the treatment of letters to the editor: those defending the wrong viewpoint only get published if they are somewhat funny or otherwise harmless. I cannot be sure about this particular case, but it is a general fact that from their power positions, the negationists use every means at their disposal to create a negative image for the Hindu opponents of Islamic imperialism, including the selective highlighting of the most clumsy and least convincing formulations of the Hindu viewpoint.

In his Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy, the Islamic apologist Ali Asghar Engineer has also selected a few incomplete and less convincing statements of the Hindu position, in order to create a semblance of willingness to hear the Hindu viewpoint while at the same time denying the Hindu side any publicity for its strongest arguments. He has kept the most decisive pieces of evidence entirely out of the readers' view, but has covered this deliberate distortion of the picture behind a semblance of even-handedness. In Anatomy of a Confrontation, the JNU historians do not even mention the powerful argumentation by Prof. A.R. Khan, while Prof. Harsh Narain and Mr. A.K. Chatterjee's presentation authentic testimonies (in Indian Express, republished by Voice of India in Hindu Temples, What happened to Them and in History vs. Casuistry) are only mentioned but not detailed and discussed, let alone refuted; but clumsy RSS pamphlets and improvised statements by BJP orators are quoted and analyzed at length.

The concluding paragraph of A.K.Sinha's rebuttal to Irfan Habib's speech points out the contradiction between the earlier work of even Marxist historians about ancient India (in which they treat the epics as sources of history, not mere fable) and their recent Babri-politicized stand: "Today, even taking the name of Mahabharata and Ramayana is considered as anti-national and communal by the communist leaders, Babri Masjid Action

Committee historians and the pseudo-secularists. What do they propose to do with all that has been published so far in [this] context by the Marxists themselves, notably D.D. Kosambi, R.S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, K.M. Shrimali, D.N. Jha and others? I have been thinking about the behaviour of our Marxist friends and historians, their unprovoked slander campaign against many colleagues, hurling abuses and convicting anyone and everyone even before the charges could be framed and proved. Their latest target is [so] sober and highly respected a person as prof. B.B. Lal, who has all his life (now he is nearing 70) never involved himself in petty politics or in the groupism [which is] so favourite a sport among the so-called Marxist intellectuals of this country. But then [slander] is a well-practised art among the Marxists."

Another trick which a student of Holocaust negationism will readily recognize in the pro-Babri campaign of the Indian negationists, is that truly daring form of amnipulation: selectively quoting an authority to make him say the opposite of his own considered opinion. When the JNU historians started slandering Prof. B.B. Lal as a turncoat hired by the VHP, this was a panic reaction after their earlier tactic had been exposed (though only in Indian Express, but the negationist front will not tolerate even one hole in the cordon of information control). Until then, they had been using B.B. Lal's fame to suport their own position that the Babri Masjid had not replaced a temple.

In their pamphlet *The Political Abuse of History*, the JNU historians had quoted from a brief summary, published by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1980, of Prof. B.B. Lal's report on his excavations in Ayodhya and other Ramayana sites. They knew this report perfectly well, for they had gleefully quoted its finding that the excavations just near the Babri Masjid had not yielded any remains pre-dating the 9th century BC. But then they had gone on to state that there was no archeological indication for a pre-Masjid temple on that controversial site at all, even when the same report had cursorily mentioned the remains of a building dated to the 11th century AD. Later on, they have quoted the same summary as saying that the later period was devoid of any interest, suggesting that nothing of any importance dating from the medieval period had been found.

In fact, this remark only proves that the ASI summarizer saw no reason to give (or saw reasons not to give) details about the uninteresting but

nonetheless existing medieval findings. But in autumn 1990, some of these details have been made public and they turned out to be of decisive importance in the Ram Janmabhoomi debate. Prof.K.N. Panikkar (in *Anatomy of a Confrontation*) suggests that, if these relevant details were not recently thought up to suit the theories of the RSS, they must have been deliberately concealed at that time (late seventies) by the ASI summarizer. The latter possibility means that negationists are active in the ASI publishing section, editing archaeological reports to suit the negationist campaign. The implied allegation is so serious that K.N. Panikkar expects the reader to assume the other alternative, viz. an RSS concoction. But he may well have hit the nail on its head with his suggestion that negationists in the ASI are doing exactly the same thing that they are doing in all Indian institutions and media: misusing their positions to distort information.

At any rate, the details of the full report were given in articles by Dr. S.P. Gupta and by Prof. B.B. Lal himself (and independently by other archaeologists in talks and letters to Indian Express) in late 1990. The pillar-bases of an 11th century building, aligned to the Babri Masjid walls, were presented by Prof. B.B. Lal and Dr. S.P.Gupta in separate filmed interviews with the BBC. There could be no doubt about it anymore: Prof. B.B. Lal had arrived at a conclusion opposite to the one ascribed to him by a number of Marxist historians (not only from JNU).

That is why in early December 1990 several of the most vocal Marxist historians suddenly took to slander and accused Prof. B.B. Lal of having changed his opinion in order to suit the VHP's political needs. Now that they could no longer use Prof. Lal's reputation for their own ends, they decided to try and destroy it. In the case of Dr. S.P. Gupta, they have not taken back their ridiculous allegation that he had falsely claimed participation in the Ramayana sites excavations. But with a big name like B.B. Lal, an impeccable academic of world fame, they had to be careful, because slander against him might somehow backfire. That is why they have not pressed the point, and why a number of Marxist historians and other participants in the Ayodhya debate have quietly reverted to the earlier tactic of selectively quoting from the ASI summary of Prof. B.B. Lal's report, and acting as if the great archaeologist has supported and even proven their own position. As the press had given minimum coverage to

B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta's revelations, many people would not suspect the truth.

Another trick from the negationists' book that has been very much in evidence during the Ayodhya debate, consists in focusing all attention on the pieces of evidence given by those who upheld the historical truth,, and trying to find fault with them as valid evidence. Thus, at the press conference (19 Dec. 1992) where Dr. S.P. Gupta and other historians presented photographs of an inscription found during the demolition of the Babri Masjid, which proved once more that a temple had stood on the site, and that it was specifically a birthplace temple for "Vishnu Hari who defeated Bali and the ten-headed king [Ravana]", some journalists heckled the speakers with remarks that "because of the demolition, the inscription was not in situ and therefore not valid as evidence", and similar feats of petty fault-finding.

A few days later, a group of 70 archaeologists and historians, mostly names who had not taken a prominent role in this debate so far, brought shame on themselves by pronouncing judgement on this piece of evidence without even seeing, let alone studying it. They demanded not that the government look into this new evidence, as would be proper for representatives of the scientific spirit, but that it trace down from which museum the planted evidence had been stolen and brought to Ayodhya. In doing history falsification, it is best to remain on the attack, and to put the bonafide historians on the defensive by accusing them first.

After dozens of pieces of evidence for the forcible replacement of temple with mosque scenario had been given, the Babri negationists had never come up with a single piece of counter- evidence (i.e. positive evidence for an alternative scenario); they could not do better than keep silent over the most striking evidence, and otherwise scream at the top of their voice that evidence A did not count, evidence B was not valid, evidence C was flawed, evidence D was fabricated. In 1992 alone, in the clearing operations near the Janmabhoomi site in June, during several visits of experts, and during the demolition on 6 December, more than 200 pieces of archaeological evidence for the pre-existent Vaishnava temple had been found, but these 70 scholars preferred to disregard all them. This time, the suggestion was that in the middle of the kar seva, the inscription had been planted there. You could just as well join the Holocaust negationists and say

that the gas chambers found in 1945 had been a Hollywood mise-en-scene. Picking at a single testimony as if the whole case depends on it has been a favourite technique of the negationists to distract attention from the larger picture, to make people forget that even if this one piece of evidence were flawed, this would not invalidate the general conclusions built on a whole corpus of evidence.

A final point of similarity between the Marxist involvement in the Babri Masjid case and the techniques of Holocaust negationism is the fact that there was a Babri Masjid debate in the first place. Indeed, postulating doubt and the need for a debate is the first step of denial. The tradition that the Babri Masjid had forcibly replaced a temple was firmly established and supported by sources otherwise accepted as authoritative; when it was challenged, this was not on the basis of newfound material which justified a re-examination of the historical position. The correct procedure would have been that the deniers of the established view come up with some positive evidence for their innovative position: until then, there was simply no reason for a debate. Instead, they started demanding that the other side give proof of what had been known all along, and forced a debate on something that was really a matter of consensus. Subsequently, instead of entering the ring, attacking or countering their opponents' case with positive evidence of their own, the challengers set themselves up as judges of the other side's argumentation. This is indeed reminiscent of the negationist Institute for Historical Review announcing a prize for whomever could prove that the Holocaust had taken place.

There is yet another trick from the negationist arsenal which has been tried in India: find a witness from the victims' camp to testify to the aggressor's innocence. Of course there are not witnesses around who lived through Aurangzeb's terror, but there are many who lived through the horrors of Partition. It is nobody's case that the killings which Jinnah considered a fair price for his Muslim state, never took place. But the negationists have spent a lot of effort on proving the next best thing: that the guilt was spread evenly among Hindus and Muslims.

The Communist novelist Bhishma Sahni has used the novel *Tamas* to point the Hindus as the villains in the Partition violence. The interesting thing is that Bhishma Sahni's own family was among the Hindu refugees hounded out of Pakistan. His anti-Hindu bias, coming from a man who would have

more reason for an anti-Muslim animus, is a gift from heaven for the Hindu-baiters. Marxist Professor Bipan Chandra parades a similar character in his paper: Communalism - the Way Out (published together with two lectures by KJhushwant Singh as: Many Faces of Communalism). One of his students had survived the terror of Partition in Rawalpindi, losing 7 family members. But he did not have any animus against the Muslims, for he said: "Very early I realized that my parents had not been killed by the Muslims, they had been killed by communalism." Coming from a victim of Muslim violence, this is excellent material for those who want to apportion equal blame to Hindus and Muslims.

Of course, Bipan Chandra's student was right. The cause of Partition and of its accompanying violence was not the Muslims, but communalism, i.e. the belief that people with a common religion form a separate social and political entity. This belief is not fostered by Hinduism, but it is central to Islam ever since Mohammed founded his first Islamic state in Medina. It is true that some Hindu groups (most conspicuously the Sikhs) have recently adopted some Islamic elements, including the communalist belief that a religious group forms a separate nation entitled to a separate state. But the source of this communalist poison in India is and remains Islam. Therefore, Bipan Chandra's student has in fact said: "My family was not killed by the Muslims, but by Islam."

It is a different matter that Muslims are the most likely carriers of the Islamic disease called communalism, and that they had massively voted for the communalist project of creating a separate Muslim state. The culprit was Islam, and concerning the positions of the Muslims in the light of the fanatical nature of Islam, I would quote Bipan Chandra's own simile for understanding the difference between communalism and its adherents: when a patient suffers from a terrible disease, you don't kill him, but cure him. The victims of Islamic indoctrination should not be the target of Hindu revenge, as they were in large numbers in 1947. Don't kill the patient, kill the disease. Remove Islam from the Muslims' minds through education and India's communal problem will be as good as solved.

At this point we may take a second look at the Marxist position, mentioned above, that the Hindu community is a recent invention. The observations which I just made concerning the Islamic provenance of communalism might seem to confirm that there was no Hindu communal

identity. However, the authentic sources from the medieval period are unanimous about the sharp realization of a separate communal identity as Muslims and as Hindus, overwhelmingly on the Muslim side, but also on the Hindu side. We know for instance that Shivaji, who turned the tide of the Muslim offensive in the late 17th century, was a conscious partisan of an all-Hindu liberation war against Muslim rule (Hindu Pad Padashahi). The same counts for Rana Pratap and many other Hindu leaders, and there cannot be any doubt that the Vijayanagar empire was conscious of its role as the last fortress of Hindu civilization.

It is true that some Hindu kings attacked neighbouring Hindu states in the back when these were attacked by the Muslim invaders. They were at first not aware that these Islamic newcomers were a common enemy, motivated by hatred against all non-Muslims; but their lack of insight into the character of Islam in no way disproves their awareness of a common Hindu identity. The fact that they were acutely aware of their internal political rivalries, does not exclude that they were aware of a more fundamental common identity, which was not at stake in these internecine feuds, but which they defended together once they realized that it was the target of this new kind of ideologically motivated aggressor, Islam. Brothers are aware that they have a lot in common, and this is not disproven by the fact that, when left to themselves, they also quarrel with each other.

If at all some Hindus had at first only been conscious of their own caste or sect rather than of the Hindu commonwealth, the Muslim persecutions of all Hindus without distinction certainly made them aware of their common identity and interest. So, if the Marxists perforce want to deny the common culture and value system underlying the diversity of the Hindu commonwealth, then let them apply some of their own dialectics instead. "It is in their common struggle against the Islamic aggressors, that the disparate sections of the native Indian society have forged their common identity as Hindus": I do not agree with this statement which posits a negative and reactive basis for a common Hindu identity, but it must be accepted if one labours under the assumption that there never had been a positive common identity before. It is unreasonable to expect the Indian Pagans to be lumped together as Hindus for centuries on end, to be uniformly made the target of one neverending aggression by Islam, to be subjected to the same humiliations and the same jizya tax, and yet not become conscious of a

common interest. This common interest would then give rise to unifying cultural superstructure. That is how the sustained and uniform Islamic attack on all India Pagans would inevitably have given rise to at least a measure of common Hindu identity if this had not previously existed.

In his *Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya* (1990), the Marxist Professor R.S. Sharma argues that the medieval Hindus did not see the Muslims as a distinct religious entity, but as an ethnic group, the Turks. His proof: the Gahadvala dynasty levied a tax called *Turushkadanda*, tax financing the war effort against the Turks. But this does not prove what Sharma thinks it proves.

The Muslims called the Pagans of India sometimes *Kafirs*, unbelievers, i.e. a religious designation; but often they called them *Hindus* inhabitants of *Hindustan*, i.e. an ethnic-geographical designation (from *Hind*, the Persian equivalent of *Sindh*). And they gave religious contents to this geographical term, which it has kept till today: so it is correct that the Hindus never defined themselves as *Hindus*, as this was the Persian and later the Muslim term for the Indian Pagans adhering to *Sanatana Dharma*. But that was only a terminological matter, the fundamental religious unity of the *Sanatana Dharmis* was just as much a fact. Similarly, the Hindus called these newcomers *Turks*, but this does not exclude recognition of their religious specificity. On the contrary, even *Teimur the Terrible*, who made it absolutely clear in his memoirs that he came to India to wage a religious war against the Pagans, and who freed the Muslim captives from a conquered city before putting the Hindu remainder to the sword, referred to his own forces as the *Turks*. Conversely, the Hindus describe as the typical Turkish behaviour pattern that which is enjoined by Islam.

While it is true that the Hindus have been much too slow (till today) in studying the religious foundation of the barbaric behaviour which they experienced at the hands of the *Turushkas*, at least they soon found out that for these invaders religion was the professed motive of their inhuman behaviour. Prof. Sharma's piece of evidence, the institution of a *Turushkandana*, does however prove very clearly that the Islamic threat was extraordinary: the normal armed forces and war credits were not sufficient to deal with this threat which was in a class by itself.

The original source material leaves us in no doubt that conflicts often erupted on purely religious grounds, even against the political and economical interests of the contending parties. The negationists' tactic therefore consists in keeping this original testimony out of view. A good example is Prof. Gyanendra Pandey's recent book, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. As the title clearly says, Pandey asserts that communalism (the Hindu-Muslim conflict) had been constructed by the British for colonial purposes and out of colonial prejudices, was later interiorized by Indians looking for new, politically profitable forms of organization in modern colonial society. This is like saying that anti-Judaism is a construction of modern capitalists to divide the working class (the standard Marxist explanation for all kinds of racism), while concealing the copious medieval testimony of anti-Judaism on undeniably non-capitalist grounds. Prof. Pandey effectively denies a millenniumful of testimonies to Islamic persecution of the Indian (Hindu) Kafirs.

Another example is prof. K.N. Panikkar's work on the Moplah rebellion,, a pogrom against the Hindus by the Malabar (Kerala) Muslims in the margin of the khilafat movement in 1921 (official death toll 2,339). Panikkar takes the orthodox Marxist position that this was not a communal but a class conflict, not between Hindus and Muslims but between workers who happened to be Muslims and landlords who happened to be Hindus. In reality the communal character of the massacre was so evident that even Mahatma Gandhi recognized it as terrible blow for his ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is quite possible that the occasion was used to settle scores with landlords and money-lenders (that stereotype of anti-Hindu as well as of anti-Jewish sloganeering), but the mullahs exhorted their flock to attack all Hindus, and added in so many words that not only the landlords but all the Hindus were their enemies. The poison of Islamic fanaticism is such that it turns any kind of conflict into an attack on the non-Muslims.

More Marxist wisdom we encounter in Romila Thapar's theory (in her contribution to S. Gopal's book on the Ayodhya affair, *Anatomy of a Confrontation*) that the current Hindu movement wants to unite all Hindus, not because the Hindus feel besieged by hostile forces, not because they have a memory of centuries of jihad, but because "a monolithic religion is more compatible with capitalism" (to borrow the formulation of a

reviewer). She thinks that the political Hindu movement is merely a concoction by Hindu capitalists, or in her own words "part of the attempt to redefine Hinduism as an ideology for modernization by the middle class", in which "modernization is seen as linked to the growth of capitalism". She reads the mind behind the capitalist conspiracy to reform Hinduism thus: "Capitalism is often believed to thrive among Semitic religions such as Christianity and Islam. The argument would then run that if capitalism is to succeed in India, then Hinduism would also have to be moulded in a Semitic form".

It is always interesting to see how Communists presuppose the superiority of Hinduism by denouncing Hindu militancy as the semiticization or islamization of Hinduism. But the point is that the political mobilization of Hindu society under the increasing pressure of hostile forces is explained away as merely a camouflage of economic forces. One smiles about such simplistic subjection of unwilling facts of Marxist dogma. Especially because such analyses were still being made in 1991, and are still being made today: in India it has not yet dawned on the dominant intelligentsia that Marxism has failed not only as a political and economical system, but also as a sociological model of explanation. On the contrary, Indian Marxists even manage to make foreign correspondents for non-Marxist media swallow their analysis, e.g. after the Babri Masjid demolition, even the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung explained Hindu fundamentalism in the same socio-economical terms, complete with urban traders who are looking for an identity etc.

Incidentally, Romila Thapar is right in observing that certain Hindu revivalists are trying to "find parallels with the Semitic religions as if these parallels are necessary for the future of Hinduism" (though her attempt to force the Ram Janmabhoomi movement into this mould, with Rama being turned into a prophet and the Ramayana into the sole revealed Scripture etc., is completely unfounded and another pathetic case of trying to force unwilling facts into a pre-conceived scheme). She sounds like favouring a renewed emphasis on "the fact that the religious experience of Indian civilization and of religious sects which are bunched together under the label of Hindu are distinctively different from that of the Semitic".

It is true that some Hindu revivalist movements have tried to redefine Hinduism in terms borrowed from monotheism, with rudiments of notions

like an infallible Scripture (back to the Vedas: the Arya Samaj), iconoclastic monotheism (Arya Samaj, Akali neo-Sikhs), or a monolithic hierarchic organization (the RSS). But the reason for this development cannot with any stretch of the imagination be deduced from the exigencies of capitalism. An honest analysis of this tendency in Hinduism to imitate the Christian-Islamic model will demonstrate that a psychology of tactical imitation as a way of self-defence against these aggressive Semitic religions was at work. The tendency cannot possibly be reduced to the socio- economical categories dear to Marxism, but springs from the terror which Islam (not feudalism or capitalism, but Islam) had struck in the Hindu mind, and which was subsequently fortified with an intellectual dimension by the Christian missionary propaganda against primitive polytheism. Those Hindus who were waging the struggle for survival against the Islamic and Christian onslaught have come to resemble their enemies a bit, and have interiorized a lot of the aggressors' contempt for typical Hindu things, such as idol-worship, doctrinal pluralism, social decentralization. It is for Hindu society to reflect on whether this imitation was the right course, and whether it has not been self- defeating in some respects.

At any rate, the very existence of this psychological need among some militant Hindus to imitate the prophetic- monotheistic religions is a symptom of an already old polarization between Hinduism and aggressive monotheism, especially Islam. Bipan Chandra's chronology of communalism as a 20th century phenomenon cannot explain the communal polarization of which Sikhism and the Arya Samaj were manifestations. These can only be understood from the centuries of active hostility between Islam and Hinduism. Shivaji was not a herald of capitalism, nor a product of British divide and rule policy, but a participant in an ongoing war between Hindu civilization and Islamic aggression.

Since the 1950s the history market is being flooded with publications conveying the negationist version to a greater or lesser extent. The public is fed negationist TV serials like The Sword of Tipu Sultan, an exercise in whitewashing the arch-fanatic last Muslim ruler. Most general readers and many serious students only get to know about Indian history through negationist glasses. In India, the negationists have managed what European negationists can only dream of: turn the tables on honest historians and marginalize them. People who have specialized in adapting history to the

party-line, are lecturing others about the political abuse of history. By contrast, genuine historians who have refused to tamper with the record of Islam (like Jadunath Sarkar, R.C. Majumdar, K.S. Lal) are held out as examples of communalist historywriting in textbooks which are required reading in all history departments in India.

But the negationists are not satisfied with seeing their own version of the facts being repeated in more and more books and papers. They also want to prevent other versions from reaching the public. Therefore, in 1982 the National Council of Educational Research and Training issued a directive for the rewriting of schoolbooks. Among other things, it stipulated that: "Characterization of the medieval period as a time of conflict between Hindus and Muslims is forbidden." Under Marxist pressure, negationism has become India's official policy.

Now that Marxism is no longer the fashion of the day, it is very easy to expose the shameless dishonesty of many vocal Marxist intellectuals. It is time to go through the record and see what they have said about the "economic successes" of the Soviet Union, the enthusiasm of the Chinese people for the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, about the Communist involvement in crimes like Katyn, and about the lies put out by the CIA-sponsored dissidents and camp survivors. Their Islam negationism is by far not their first systematic falsification of a chapter of history.

When the Marxists start lecturing Hindus about tolerance and the respect for Barbar's mosque, it is easy to put them on the defensive by asking what happened to churches, mosques and temples when Mao took over. Communist regimes' treatment of religion has been similar to Islam's treatment of infidelity. Either religious people had the zimmi status, i.e. they were suffered to exist but at the cost of career prospects, benefit of social or material benefits, always under the watchful eye of police informers, and of course without the right to convert or to object to state atheism's conversion efforts (according to the Chinese Constitution, there is a right to practise religion and a right to practise and propagate atheism); or they were simply persecuted, their religious education forbidden (in the Soviet Union, many people have spent years in jail for transporting Bibles or teaching Hebrew), their places of worship demolished or expropriated for secular use. Communism and Islam are truly comrades in intolerance.

Certainly some statements can be dug up of Indian Communists defending the Cultural Revolution in which so many thousands of places of worship were destroyed and their personnel brutalized or killed. When the Khumar Rouge were in power, less than 1,000 of the 65,000 Buddhist monks managed to survive : what did the Indian Marxists (card- carrying and other) say then? The bigger part of the Marxists' success was in their aggressiveness: as long as they remained on the offensive, everyone tried to live up to the norms they prescribed. Now it is time to put them to scrutiny.

2.5 FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR INDIAN NEGATIONISM

Some foreign authors, influenced by Indian colleagues, have also added a big dose of negationism to their work on Indian history. For instance, Percival Spear, co-author (with Romila Thapar) of the *Penguin History of India*, writes: "*Aurangzeb's supposed intolerance is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on a temple site in Benares.*"

This is a repetition of the thesis defended by Zahiruddin Faruki in his "Aurangzeb and his times" (1935), recently taken up again by S.N.M. Abdi in *Illustrated Weekly of India* (5/12/1992), who claims that Aurangzeb was not anti-Hindu, and that the *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri* (made available to the public by the Royal Society of Bengal and translated by Jadunath Sarkar), which lists Aurangzeb's temple-destroying activities from day to day, is a forgery. Faruki and Abdi count on the public's limited zeal for checking the sources, when they falsely claim that "apart from the *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*, there is no other reference to the order for the destruction of temples", and that we do not hear of any protest which large-scale temple destruction would have caused.

Abdi thinks he can get away with claiming as evidence a stone slab allegedly seen by Faruki in the Gyanvapi mosque in Benares, mentioning a date (1659) that does not tally with the traditional date (1669) of the forcible replacement of the Kashi Vishvanath temple with this mosque; even while admitting that "the slab seen by Faruki has disappeared mysteriously, along with another significant piece of evidence". Without blinking, he then cites a theory that the Gyanvapi mosque already existed under Akbar, i.e. a century before either of the two dates. Further, he quotes as authority a local agitator who claims: "My research reveals that a Buddhist vihara was demolished to make way for a temple, which was subsequently pulled down and the Gyanvapi mosque constructed on its site." The first claim, in spite of flaunting the pretentious term research, is a plain lie; the second is of course true but contradicts the case which Mr. Abdi is building up. Such is the quality of the argument for Aurangzeb's tolerance and Hindu-friendliness.

What are the facts? In Benares (Varanasi), Aurangzeb (1658-1707) did not just build an isolated mosque on a destroyed temple. He ordered all temples destroyed, among them the Kashi Vishvanath, one of the most sacred places of Hinduism, and had mosques built on a number of cleared temple sites. All other Hindu sacred places within his reach equally suffered destruction, with mosques built on them; among them, Krishna's birth temple in Mathura, the rebuilt Somnath temple on the coast of Gujrat, the Vishnu temple replaced with the Alamgir mosque now overlooking Benares, the Treta-ka-Thakur temple in Ayodhya. The number of temples destroyed by Aurangzeb is counted in 4, if not in 5 figures. According to the official court chronicle, Aurangzeb "ordered all provincial governors to destroy all schools and temples of the Pagans and to make a complete end to all Pagan teachings and practices". The chronicle sums up the destructions like this: "Hasan Ali Khan came and said that 172 temples in the area had been destroyed... His majesty went to Chittor, and 63 temples were destroyed... Abu Tarab, appointed to destroy the idol-temples of Amber, reported that 66 temples had been razed to the ground".

In quite a number of cases, inscriptions on mosques and local tradition do confirm that Aurangzeb built them in forcible replacement of temples (some of these inscriptions have been quoted in Sitaram Goel: Hindu Temples, vol.2, along with a number of independent written accounts). Aurangzeb's reign was marked by never-ending unrest and rebellions, caused by his anti-Hindu policies, which included the reimposition of the jizya and other zimma rules, and indeed the demolition of temples.

Aurangzeb did not stop at razing temples: their users too were levelled. There were not just the classical massacres of thousands of resisters, Brahmins, Sikhs. What gives a more pointed proof of Aurangzeb's fanaticism, is the execution of specific individuals for specific reason of intolerance. To name the best-known ones: Aurangzeb's brother Dara Shikoh was executed because of apostasy (i.e. taking an interest in Hindu philosophy), and the Sikh guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded because of his objecting to Aurangzeb's policy of forcible conversions in general, and in particular for refusing to become a Muslim himself. Short, Percival Spear's statement that Aurangzeb's fanaticism is but a hostile legend, is a most serious case of negationism.

An example of a less blatant (i.e. more subtle) form of negationism in Western histories of India, is the India entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Its chapter on the Sultanate period (which was much more bloody than even the Moghul period) does not mention any persecutions and massacres of Hindus by Muslims, except that Firuz Shah Tughlaq "made largely unsuccessful attempts to convert his Hindu subjects and sometimes persecuted them". The article effectively obeys the negationist directive that "characterization of the medieval period as a time of Hindu- Muslim conflict is forbidden".

It also contains blissful nonsense about communal amity in places where the original sources only mention enmity. Thus, it says that Bahmani sultan Tajuddin Firuz extracted tribute payments and the hand of the king's daughter from the Hindu bastion Vijayanagar after two military campaigns, and that this resulted in "the establishment of an apparently amicable relationship between the two rulers". Jawaharlal Nehru considered the induction of Hindu women in Muslim harems as the cradle of composite culture (his euphemism for Hindu humiliation), but it is worse if even the venerable Encyclopedia considers the terms of debate as a sign of friendship. At any rate, the article goes on to observe naively that peace lasted only for ten years, when Vijaynagar forces inflicted a crushing defeat on Firuz. In this case, the more circumspect form of negationism is at work: keeping the inconvenient facts out of the readers' view, and manipulating the terminology.

An American historian's book is introduced thus: "In this book [Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India], Sandra Freitag examines one of the central problems of modern Indian history, the Hindu-Muslim conflict, with new and provocative insight. She challenges long-standing interpretations by defining this conflict as a developing social process groups, not simply Hindu or Muslim, in highly specific local contexts bound together in a changing institutional order."

This sophisticated verbiage cannot conceal that the book's approach is merely the standard secularist version propagated by Indian establishment historians since decades. There is nothing new and provocative about a book that claims to explain communalism without touching on its single most important determinant, viz. the doctrine laid down in Islamic scripture,

and that blurs the clear-cut process of India's communalization by Islam with the help of scapegoats like colonialism.

It is not entirely clear to what extent such Western authors are conscious accomplices in the intellectual crime of negationism, and to what extent they are just gullible copiers of the version given to them by English-speaking Indians. In the case of a historian invited by Penguin to write a History of India, it is hard to believe that he didn't know better.

Another case of malafide reporting is former Time correspondent Edward Desmond's lengthy review of JNU Professor S. Gopal's *Anatomy of a Confrontation* in the New York Review of Books. I know that Mr. Desmond had gone through the books stating the Hindu case on Ayodhya; he had talked to both Mr. Sitaram Goel and myself (by telephone); he knew about hard evidence for the temple that was forcibly replaced by the Babri Masjid, including Prof. B.B. Lal's filmed presentation of the archaeological evidence. And yet, like Prof. Gopal, he strictly keeps the lid on the Hindu case, does not mention the extensive documentary evidence, and curtly dismisses the archaeological evidence as bogus. Here, the psychology at work is apparently that of status-consciousness: you wouldn't expect a senior correspondent of a big American magazine to prefer the company of marginal pro-Hindu writers to that of prestigious Stalinist professors of India's Harvard, would you?

On the other hand, in the day-to-day reporting on the communal situation in India, there is a lot of bonafide copying of the anti-Hindu views dominant in the Indian English-language press. A typical mixed case of some complicity and some gullibility was the TV documentary about Hindu fundamentalism made by BBC correspondent Brian Barron, and broadcast in the week of the first round of the Lok Sabha elections in May 1991. Brian Barron is an otherwise meritorious journalist, witness his revelations in October 1991 about the massacre of thousands of Buddhist monks in the early years of communist rule in Mongolia. But his programme about the Hindu movement was second-rate and biased. For a start, it contained some factual mistakes (like a map meant to show the trail of Hindu leader L.K. Advani's procession in support of the Ram Janmabhoomi cause, which drew a line unrelated to the actual trail, apart from placing Delhi on the Ganga river), exemplifying the carelessness which Western correspondents can afford when it comes to India reporting.

Barron said that India had already been partitioned because of religion. In fact, India has been partitioned because of Islam, against the will of other religions, and this seemingly small inaccuracy is an old trick to distribute the guilt of Islam in partitioning India over all religions equally. Barron made no attempt to seem impartial, and introduced BJP leader L.K. Advani as a demagogue. He asked Advani's declared enemy V.P. Singh whether Advani was not merely putting a humane mask on fanaticism. Easy, that way V.P. Singh only had to say yes. He failed to take the opportunity to question V.P. Singh about his political marriage with the Muslim fundamentalist leader Imam Bukhari, while that was a case of a Hindu promoting fundamentalism as well. He let Swami Agnivesh, a Marxist in ochre robe, accuse the BJP of mixing religion and politics, but neglected to inform the viewers that Swami Agnivesh has himself combining monkhood with being a Janata Dal candidate in the Lok Sabha elections.

When Barron asked Advani why he had allowed so much bloodshed on his procession (the rathayatra of October 1990), whereas in fact there had been no riots all along the path of his month-long journey, Advani correctly said: "You are taken in by a disinformation campaign." A serious journalist would have inquired deeper when his sources, with which the quality of his work stands or falls, are questioned so pointedly. When a sadhu said that Muslims refuse to respect Hindus and that Hindus are legally discriminated against, Barron did not inquire what these discriminations were. Like all western reporters, he has reported on Hindu fundamentalism without asking even once why this movement has emerged, instead relaying the Marxist line that it is all a camouflage for class (c.q. caste) interests, an artificial creation for petty political gain.

Barron interviewed prof. Romila Thapar, who accused the Hindu movement of aiming at a system in which some communities would be second-class citizens living in constant fear for their lives. From a spokeswoman of Marxism, which has held entire populations in constant fear and oppression, and which has killed numerous millions of "contrarevolutionary elements" (to use the criminalizing, dehumanizing Marxist term), the allegation sounds rather shameless. But the viewers were not told where Romila Thapar stands, they were led to believe that this was a neutral observer who had been asked for an objective explanation. The same thing

has happened a number of times in both Time Magazine and Newsweek: Bipan Chandra, Romila Thapar and their comrades get quoted as if they are non-partisan authorities. Though anti-Communist in their general reporting, when it comes to India, these papers (unknowingly?) present the Marxists' viewpoint as objective in-depth background information.

Only ten years ago, the Left-oriented media in many Western countries freely attacked the really existing capitalism and also conjured up all kinds of fantastic CIA and neo-fascist conspiracies, but scrupulously shielded the really existing socialism from criticism. Similarly, Brian Barron gave Prof. Thapar the chance to say her thing about unproven sinister plans imputed to the Hindu movement, but scrupulously refrained from pointing out that Miss Thapar's picture of a theocratic society in which minorities are second-class citizens living in mortal fear, is already really existing in the neighbouring Islamic republic of Pakistan and in many Muslim states (and, *mutatis mutandis* in Communist countries).

These days, reporting on the communal situation in India consists in highlighting the splinter in the Hindu eye and concealing the beam in the Muslim eye. At the time of the 1991 Lok Sabha elections, the German left-leaning weekly Der Spiegel summarized the communal riots in independent India as follows: "Since 1947, Indian statisticians have counted 11,000 riots with 12,000 Muslim victims." Hindu victims are not even mentioned, as if you were reading a fundamentalist paper like Muslim India or Radiance.

The Ayodhya conflict offers a good examples of the absurd standards applied by reporters. A Hindu sacred site, back in use as a Hindu temple (since 1949 with, since 1986 without restrictions) after centuries of Muslim occupation, is claimed by Muslim leaders, who also insist on continuing the occupation of two other sacred sites in Mathura and Kashi (and numerous other sites which the Hindu leaders are not even claiming back). Claiming the right to occupy other communities' sacred sites: if this is not fanatical, I don't know what is. Yet, the whole world press is on the side of the Muslims, and decries a Hindu plan to build proper temple architecture on the Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya as fanatical. These are not just double standards, but inverted standards.

The very fact that Muslims in India loudly complain about their situation (e.g. about their low educational level, which is 100% the fault of their own

mullahs), proves that they are relatively well-off: as I have had the occasion to observe, Hindu visitors or refugees from Pakistan often do not dare to speak of the horrible conditions in which they are forced to live under Muslim rule, because they fear for their relatives, and because the constant terror has conditioned them never to raise any objections against the Muslim master race. Inside these Muslim states, the remaining Hindus are even more careful never to displease the Muslim masters. For unthinking journalists, their silence is proof that all is well for the minorities in Muslim states, and so they prefer to listen to the vocal malcontents who air the Muslim grievances in tolerant India. Whoever shouts loudest, will get our correspondents' attention, if only because India reporting is mostly of a very low professional quality.

An example of the slanted impression which the Nehruvian establishment creates about Hindu-Muslim relations, concerns the internationally highlighted martyrdom of the Flemish Jesuit Father Rasschaert, near Ranchi in 1964. Father Rasschaert's sister was a friend of my mother's, so as a child I have often heard the details of the story. The part which everybody knows, is that Muslims had fled into a mosque, where Hindus wanted to pursue them, when Father Rasschaert intervened to pacify the crowd, but was killed by the Hindus who subsequently massacred the Muslims.

But the start of the story, never highlighted and sometimes not even mentioned in the contemporary newspaper reports (much less in later references), was that the Hindus in the area had been angered by the sight of mutilated Hindus who had been brought by train from East Pakistan, where they had at least survived the massacres which many more had not. As always, Hindu violence was a retaliation against Muslim violence. No missionary has stepped in to defend the Hindus of Pakistan, in fact no missionary was around, as missions have a very hard time in Pakistan. The missions in Islamic countries find their converts harassed and even killed by their own families, their schools and churches attacked on all kinds of pretexts, their graduates not given jobs. So, the missionary centres prefer to direct their energies to more hospitable countries like India. The fact that a missionary was killed by a Hindu while defending the Muslims, and not the other way round, proves in the first place that Catholic priests can function in India, much more than in Pakistan. A closer scrutiny of this one

incidence of Hindu fanaticism reveals a background of much more systematic and institutionalized Muslim fanaticism.

There is a third aspect to the story, which is never mentioned at all. It is that the Hindus in Ranchi were desperate about their government's unwillingness to defend the Hindus in Pakistan. One of the chief culprits behind the massacre was Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the patron of secularism, who used Father Rasschaert's death as yet another occasion to parade his concern for the minorities in India, and to put Hindus in the dock. He himself (and the entire secularist establishment till today) reneged on his duty to defend the Hindus surviving in the Islamic state which he had helped to create. By effectively condoning the persecution of Hindus in Pakistan, he was also responsible for the retaliatory Hindu violence. But the international press has never thought the matter through, and confined its reporting on Father Rasschaert's death to condemning the Hindu fanatics, weeping for the Muslim victims, and praising Nehru as the voice of sanity amid the religious madness.

The way our journalists are led by the nose towards reporting Muslim grievances and ignoring grievances of Hindu minorities (and ridiculing the very real grievances of even the Hindu majority in India), is reminiscent of the sneaking bias in all non-rightist media in Western Europe about the Left-right conflict before the Gorbachov era. They all complied with Marxist-imposed terminology like dictator Pinochet but president Ceaucescu, or rightist rebels but leftist resistance. Criticism of the West was available in plenty, and given wide coverage, but the muted populations of the Soviet bloc were not heard, and little effort was made to go in and hear them. Those who supported the cause of freedom in the Soviet bloc were ridiculed. Worse, when in 1968 the Russian physicist Sakharov had a report about massive human rights violations in the USSR published, leading intellectuals actually denied the existence of "that so-called Russian physicist invented by the reactionary forces to slander the glorious achievements of socialism in the USSR". Yes, so noxious was the intellectual atmosphere in the heyday of Marxism. In those days it was "better to be wrong with [communist] Sartre than to be right with [anti-communist] Aron".

When glasnost made clear just how strong the Soviet bloc populations' disgust with communalism really was, Western intellectuals and socialist

parties seemed sincerely surprised. They themselves had so often pleaded that life in the Soviet system was not really worse than in the "so-called free" West. The press had never given us an adequate picture, not by telling outright lies, but by ignoring the muted voices which the communist dictators wanted us to ignore. At any rate, if there used to be far more demonstrations in the streets of the West than in the Soviet bloc, did it prove that there was less discontent in the latter? We now know better: there was more protest in the West than in the Soviet bloc because there was more freedom and less fear in the West, and in spite of deeper discontent in the Soviet bloc. There is no excuse for making the same mistake in our reporting on the situation of the minorities in India and in Muslim countries.

Without really noticing, the Western press has become the mouth-piece of the Marxist-Muslim alliance which dictates political parlance in India. I assume only a few frontline journalists are conscious participants in the ongoing disinformation campaign. Brian Barron, for one, has demonstrated to what extent he has interiorized the anti-Hindu bias of his Indian spokespersons, with a very little but truly unpardonable piece of disinformation. Reporting on the million-strong demonstration for the Ram Janmabhoomi temple (Delhi, 4 April 1991), he showed a monk carrying a saffron-coloured flag with a white swastika. And for the less perceptive viewers, he added in so many words that the Hindu movement carried the swastika. Of course he knew these two things: (1) most Western viewers know the swastika only as the symbol of Nazism; (2) most Indians know the swastika only as their own age-old symbol of good fortune (swasti = well-being). He must have known perfectly well that he was making the Western viewers read a message which the Hindu demonstrators never sent, viz. that the Hindu movement links up with Nazism. Regardless of the moral quality of such distortive reporting, it goes to show to what extent the negationist faction in the Indian media has managed to picture the Hindus as the bad guys in the eyes of the world.

A few more examples of how Western India-watchers swallow Indian secularist disinformation. The pro-Ram Janmabhoomi demonstration in Delhi on 4 April 1991 was not reported in 99% of the Western papers and electronic news channels. I have inquired among journalists about what they had received on their telexes concerning the largest-ever demonstration

in the biggest democracy in the world. It turned out that these had mentioned 3 lakh demonstrators (when even the government-controlled police had given the estimate of 8 lakh), and not made the object of the demonstration clear at all. The Indian sources had deliberately blurred and minimized the information, so that the Western media had, in good faith, not deemed it worth mentioning. If six weeks later Brian Barron reported the number as more than a million demonstrators, it was not to correct this earlier lapse, but because of a different psychology. His aim was not to deny the importance and magnitude of the Hindu movement which he detests so much, but on the contrary to make it into a titillatingly gruesome dinosaur: the TV consumers have heard enough about Muslim fundamentalism, so if you want to get them interested in a new brand of fundamentalism, you have to make it extra big and colourful.

Another example is the news concerning the Indian attitude to the second Gulf War in early 1991. The Delhi correspondent for the Flemish radio station BRTN said that the Indian population was on the side of Saddam, against the Anglo-American forces (and their Saudi employers). That is just what the Times of India editorial had said a few days earlier. In fact, the Indian people was not on Saddam's side at all. The Hindus had always cheered for Israel in its wars with the Arabs, and now they were all for the defeat of this Arab Hitler who had announced he would "burn half of Israel with chemical weapons". The Muslim support for Saddam's jihad against the Crusaders was not exactly massive either. Firstly, millions of Indian Muslims personally suffered when they or their relatives lost their jobs in Iraq and Kuwait as a result of Saddam's annexation of Kuwait. Secondly, most Muslim leaders are financed by the Arab monarchies (including Kuwait), and they sided with their paymasters, either openly or by their quiet refusal to support Saddam. The only ones who supported Saddam were the hard core of the Nehruvian establishment (who forced the Chandra Shekhar government to stop allowing American war planes to land in Bombay), and the communists with their visceral anti-Americanism. A strike imposed on the communists with their visceral anti-Americanism. A strike imposed on the Calcutta dockers by the Communist trade-union was about the only sign of Indian support for Saddam, but our correspondent played it up as merely one example of a nation-wide movement. I hope it was in good faith on his part, but for the Times of India there cannot be such a benefit of the doubt.

Foreign correspondents in Delhi should realize that the Indian media and academia are entirely untrustworthy when it comes to reporting on the Hindu-Muslim conflict. When you report the truth about the democratic opposition in China or Tibet, you don't copy the People's Daily. When you want to know the truth about the Kurdish freedom struggle, you don't trust the Iraqi state radio. So, when you want to understand the Hindu backlash, you don't believe strictly partisan sources like the Times of India, or party-line historians like those from JNU or AMU.

If a Mr. Vijay Singh writes in *Le Monde Diplomatique* an article full of secularist invective titled: Hindu Fundamentalism, a Menace for India, it is simply the reflection of a vested interest in blackening Hinduism, though it is sold as an in-depth comment by a first-hand observer. It so happens that the article is partly an unacknowledged quotation from the introductory chapter of the book "Understanding the Muslim Mind" by Rajmohan Gandhi, a party politician of Iman Bukhari's favourite Janata Dal (nicknamed Jinnah Dal). If in another issue of the same prestigious French monthly, Mrs. Francine R. Frankel mouths all the worn-out secularist slogans against what she calls the "Violent Offensive of Hindu Extremists", it merely proves her incapability of reading her Indian sources with the distance befitting partisan pamphlets. It is quite a shameful matter that Western media have swallowed and reproduced many similar motivated distortion.

The extreme ignorance and gullibility of the foreign press provides the negationists with a strategic cover. Most English-knowing Indians believe that the Western intelligentsia is more objective and competent, and they keep on believing this even in domains where the West is completely ignorant and incompetent. So the negationists feel supported in the back by an outside world which they can manipulate but which many in India still consider as a standard of truth. If the Hindu leadership had taken the trouble of studying the mental determinants of India's political configuration, it would have blown this cover away by spreading first-hand information to the foreign media, and educating them about the Stalinist-Islamic grip on the Indian establishment.

In Great Britain and the United States, the anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim bias in India reporting can partly be explained by the political tilt towards Pakistan (now waning because of Pakistan's nuclear ambitions). Thus, the

prestigious British weekly The Economist has, in a predictably negative article about nationalism and separatism, held up the creation of Pakistan as an undisputably justified case of separatism (small wonder that British Muslims are imitating their Indian Muslim grandfathers and demanding a separate "non-territorial state of British Muslims", justifiable on exactly the same grounds). A more universal reason is that they never get to know the Hindu viewpoint from competent and eloquent spokesmen: firstly, these have practically no access to the national English-language press, which Western correspondents in Delhi faithfully copy because they are too lazy to seek out news for themselves; secondly, the Hindus themselves have not yet sufficiently realized the importance of public relations.

The most important reason is probably the political atmosphere in Europe which demands that for the sake of anti-racism and multiculturalism, Islam as the most conspicuous and assertive guest culture in Europe gets painted in rosy colours. The result of this imperative not to expose Muslim fanaticism is that even avowedly Christian papers in the West keep silent about the ongoing persecution of Christian papers and other minorities in the Middle East. Christians cherish the illusion of a dialogue with Islam, so they will not offend their Muslim partners by raising inconvenient issues like the status of religious minorities in Muslim countries. Now, if the West does not stand up for its persecuted Christian brethren, how much less will it be bothered about the idolatrous Hindus.

And so, Western India-watchers go on licking the boots of the aggressor, and keep on twisting contemporary news in the media, and to a lesser extent even historical facts in academic publications, to the advantage of the Muslim side. They have not invented the Indian brand of negationism, but they are amplifying and fortifying it.

2.6 BANNING INCONVENIENT BOOKS

A consequence of the negationist orientation of the Indian state's religious policy, is the readiness to ban books critical of Islam at the slightest suggestion by some mullah or Muslim politician. It is symptomatic that India was the first country to ban Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, at the insistence of Syed Shahabuddin, MP (in exchange, with some other concessions, for his calling off a march on Ayodhya). Among other banned books, we may mention pamphlet-like but nonetheless truthful books like Colin Maine's *"The Dead hand of Islam"* or A. Ghosh's *"The Koran and the Kafir"*, which list what the Quran has in store for the unbelievers; but also more prestigious books like R.M. Eaton's *"Sufis of Bijapur"*, which debunks the myth of the Sufis as bringers of a tolerant Islam (in fact they were not only fanatical preachers against *idolatry*, but also spies and sometimes mercenaries).

In March 1991, Ram Swarup's book "Understanding Islam through Hadis" was banned, after the Hindi version had already been banned in 1990. This happened after two committees set up by the Delhi administration had screened the book and found it unobjectionable, and after the judge had dismissed the plea for prosecution of its publisher, under the pressure of Muslim demonstrations. This book is a faithful summary of the Sahih al-Muslim, one of the two most authoritative Hadis collections (acts of the Prophet). According to the fundamentalist party Jamaat-i Islami the book contained "distortion and slander", and as an example of this slanderous distortion, it mentions this passage: "Mohammed saw Zaynab in half-naked condition, and he fell in love with her". With this revelation, the fundamentalists managed to get some agitation going, and the book was banned.

The interesting thing is that the quoted passage comes straight from the original Hadis, and is not a slanderous distortion at all. The agitation against the book reveals an important fact about the Muslim community: the ordinary Muslim does not know the contents of Quran and Hadis, and projects on Mohammed his own moral ideals, which he largely shares with his non-Muslim fellow-men. Because of his attachment to the mental image of a morally perfect Mohammed, he is shocked when he gets confronted with the historical Mohammed. Among the many historical acts of

Mohammed is his arranging the hand-over to himself of Zaynab, the beautiful wife of his adopted son. The fact that a revelation from Allah came to legitimize the marriage between Mohammed and Zaynab (which was a breach of the tribal incest taboo), became the classic illustration of the view that the Quran is nothing but the self-interested product of Mohammed's own mind.

This ignorance about the historical Mohammed, both among the common Muslims and among the Hindus, is precisely what the banned book wanted to do something about, in keeping with the Indian Constitution's injunction to "develop the scientific temper". But the Nehruvian establishment (which includes the Congress Party and its Janata Dal offshoot) has no liking for free research into the contents of Islamic doctrine and history, and in spite of loud slogans about secularism, the administration gave in to the Muslim fanatics. None of the so-called secularist intellectuals has bothered to protest against this obscurantist act of censorship.

The official motivation for this banning of meritortious books is that they have been written with the intention of insulting a religion or inciting communal conflict (art. 153A and art. 295A of the Indian Penal Code). Under section 95 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the executive power must take action against its initial users. For, according to some, there is a bok which fulfils the description given in the Penal Code, even to a far greater extent than the already banned book; but which is recited and invested with supreme authority in state-subsidized schools and in prayer-houses in every town and village of india. This objectionable book is known as the Quran.

In 1984 a citizen of India, H.K. Chakraborty, filed a petition with the West Bengal state government to ban the Quran. He added a list of 37 Quran verses which "preach cruelty, incite violence and disturb public peace" (to use the terminology of the Penal Code), 17 verses which "promote, on grounds of religion, feelings of enmity, hatred and ill-will between different communities in India", and 31 verses which "insult other religions as also the religious beliefs of other communities". Indeed, even after subtracting some verses which could be regarded as legitimate polemics (esp. against the Christian belief in Incarnation), there are about 60 passages in the Quran that formulate a doctrine of demonization of non-Muslims, and of hatred and war against them. If the Indian laws prohibit communal hate

propaganda, Mr. Chakraborty was right in considering the Quran as an excellent candidate for banning. But even after reminder-letters, the West Bengal authorities gave no response.

At this stage, Mr. Chakraborty met Chandmal Chopra, an adherent of the extremely non-violent Jain sect, who had taken up the study of the Quran in order to understand the plight of the Hindus in Bangladesh, who are gradually being chased from their ancestral homeland by the Muslims. In 1985 Chandmal Chopra filed a petition with the Calcutta high Court, asking for a ban on the Quran. He added a list with reprehensible verses from the Quran: 29 passages from the Quran (1 to 8 verses in length) that incite violence against unbelievers, 15 which promote enmity, 26 which insult other religions.

Some typical examples are: "Mohammed in Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are merciless for the unbelievers but kind to each other." (Q.48:29) "Make war on them until idolatry does not exist any longer and Allah's religion reigns universally." (Q.8:39, also 2:193) "We break with you; hatred and enmity will reign between us until ye believe in Allah alone." (Q. 60.4) "The Jews and Christians and the Pagans will burn forever in the fire of hell. They are the vilest of all creatures." (Q.98:51) There are dozens of Quran verses like this which in their unanimity cannot be dismissed as "isolated, mistranslated" little accidents "quoted out of context".

Chandmal Chopra stated in his writ petition: "The cited passages in the Quran... arouse in Muslims the worst sectarian passions and religious fanaticism, which has manifested itself in murders, massacres, plunder, arson, rape and destruction or desecration of sacred places both in historical and in the contemporary period, not only in India but in large parts of the world."

The petition created a lot of furore in Calcutta and abroad. Muslims created street riots. The government intervened and put heavy pressure on the judicial process. The secret service was put to work to find possible objectionable biographical data of the petitioner. The court used some dirty tricks to disturb the petitioner's case, like changing dates and changing the object of a session to which the petitioner had been summoned, during the

same session itself, with apparent foreknowledge of the government's counsel.

Both the authorities and the court violated the secular basis of the Indian Constitution by using as justification for their policy c.q. judgement a statement of religious belief. The Marxist West Bengal government stated in its affidavit: "The Quran contains the words of God Almighty revealed to His last Prophet Mohammed... As the Holy Quran is a Divine Book, no earthly power can sit in judgement on it, and no court of law has jurisdiction to adjudicate it."

The judge dismissed the petition on this ground: "Banning or forfeiture of the Quran... would amount to abolition of the Muslim religion itself." Indeed, the very text which preaches war against the unbelievers is the core text of Islam, so abolition of Islamic hate propaganda amounts to abolition of Islam itself. Islam without hatred is not Islam. The judge further observed: "This book is not prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between religions. Because of the Quran no public tranquillity has been disturbed upto now..." - a resounding statement of negationism.

This verdict was only what the petitioner expected: because of political pressure, an anti-Quran verdict was simply unthinkable, and moreover, the Penal Code keeps scriptures and classics outside its own purview. The petitioner has made it clear that he considers book-banning counterproductive, and that the controversial petition was meant to direct public attention towards the Quran's contents: people should read it, because Indian citizens have a right to know why their country is plagued with never-ending religious riots.

When Chandmal Chopra had the documents of the legal dispute published, the administration decided to prosecute him and his publisher on the basis of the very same Penal Code articles which he had invoked to request a ban on the Quran. The case is still pending.

Beside H.K. Chakraborty's and Chandmal Chopra's petitions, a third text which pointed at the Quran as a source of religious violence, was a poster published in Delhi (1986) by I.S. Sharma and Rajkumar Arya, prominent members of the Hindu Mahasabha, a small political party more extreme than the BJP. The poster carried the title: "Why do riots break out in this country?" It showed 24 Quran verses, such as: "Fight the unbelievers in

your surroundings, and let them find harshness in you" (Q.9:123), and : "Kill the unbelievers wherever ye find them,, capture and besiege them and prepare them every kind of ambush" (Q.9.5).

Both publishers were arrested on the basis of arts. 153A and 295A. However, they were acquitted. The judged ruled that they had made a "fair criticism", for: "With all due respect to the holy Quran, an attentive perusal of the verses shows that these are indeed harmful and preach violence and have the potential to cause conflicts between the Muslims and the others." An appeal against the court ruling is still pending.

This criticism of the Quran pulls the carpet from under the negationists' feet. The enmity between Muslims and Pagans is clearly not a back-projection from contemporary artificially created religio-political tensions. Neither is it a conflict which developed historically long after Mohammed and which can be reduced to socio-economical factors. This enmity is, on the contrary, present in the very core of Islamic doctrine.

With this information about Quranic doctrine, we find that the negationist thesis is not only contradicted by a massive body of authentic evidence; it is also highly implausible in itself. For, the thesis that Islam in India was not systematically (proportionately to its possibilities in given situations) in conflict with other religions, claims in fact that Islam in India deviated from its own principles, and behaved completely uncharacteristically for centuries on end. It is methodologically more usual to provisionally assume a consistent and probable behaviour (viz. that adherents of a God-given call to war against the unbelievers effectively make war on the unbelievers, and that a religion which persecuted other religions everywhere else, did the same in India), and only give this up if positive evidence for a less plausible and more inconsistent course has been found. But what positive evidence there is, points in the opposite direction: a long list of Muslim invaders and rulers faithfully put the Quranic injunctions into practice.

The problem of book-banning and censorship on Islam criticism is compounded by the related problem of self- censorship. Thus, when in late 1992, the famous columnist Arun Shourie wanted to publish a collection of his columns on Islamic fundamentalism, esp. the Rushdie and Ayodhya affairs (Indian Controversies), the publisher withdrew at the last moment, afraid of administrative or physical reprisals, and the printer also backed

out. Earlier, Shourie had been lucky to find one paper willing to publish these columns, for most Indian newspapers strictly keep the lid on Islam criticism. Hindu society is a terrorized society.

A final aspect of the ban (sometimes legal, mostly imposed by secularist convention) on criticism of Islam is that it is the re-institution of an old Islamic rule. When the Christians in Syria in the first century of Islam were forced to submit, they had to sign a long list of promises to their Islamic overlords. These comprised the well-known conditions imposed on the zimmi, but also some extra ones, including "not to teach our children the Quran". Like Mohammed, his successors found it hard to counter the numerous objections to the contradictions and unethical injunctions in the Quran, which perceptive infidels kept on raising. It was logical that they prohibited the study of the Quran by non-Muslims, in order to preemptively disarm future anti-Islamic polemicists. This ban by the theocratic caliphate on unfriendly inspection of the Quran is now re-instituted in India in the name of secularism.

2.7 THE NEGATIONISTS' SECOND FRONT

Not satisfied with denying the crimes of Islam, the negationists have recently made a big effort to spread the notion that Hinduism itself is guilty of just the same things of which it accuses Islam. Remember, Holocaust negationists always allege and highlight Israeli injustice against the Palestinians: if you prove that the victim is not so innocent, it will ultimately become questionable that he was a victim at all. If ever the denial of Muslim fanaticism has to be given up, a second line of defence (or counter-attack) will be ready: accusing Hinduism of a similar fanaticism.

For example, in the Indian media you regularly come across the contention that "the Hindus destroyed Nalanda Buddhist university". This is a plain lie: under several Hindu dynasties, Nalanda flourished and was the biggest university in the world for centuries; it was destroyed by the Muslim invader Bakhtiar Khilji in 1200. But if you repeat a lie often enough, it gains currency, and now many Indians have come to believe that Buddhism had been replaced by Hinduism as India's chief religion in a most violent manner.

In reality, Buddhism had always been a minority religion in India, confined to nobles and traders; before its disappearance around 1200 AD, it had been partly reabsorbed by mainstream Hinduism; otherwise it co-existed peacefully with other Hindu sects, often sharing the same temple-complexes. The historical allegations of violent conflicts between mainstream Hinduism and Buddhism can be counted on one hand. It is not Brahminical onslaught but Islam that chased Buddhism from India.

In Central Asia, Islam had wiped out Buddhism together with Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, and whatever other religion it encountered. The Persian word for idol is *but*, from Buddha, because the Buddhists with their Buddha-status were considered as the idol-worshippers par excellence. The Buddhists drew the wrath of every Muslim *but-shikan* (idol-breaker), even where they had not offered resistance against the Muslim armies because of their doctrine of non-violence. As a reminder of the Buddhist past of Central Asia, the city name Bukhara is nothing but a corruption of *vihara*, i.e. a Buddhist monastery; other Indian names include Samarkhand and Takshakhand, i.e. Tashkent. In India, Buddhism was a much easier target than other sects and traditions, because it was completely centralized

around the monasteries. Once the monasteries destroyed and the monks killed, the Buddhist community had lost its backbone and was helpless before the pressure to convert to Islam (as happened on a large scale in East Bengal).

A handful of negationist historians have tried to substantiate the allegations against Hinduism and spared no effort to collect instances of Hindus acts of persecution. We will take a look at them here. It would take a whole volume to sum up Aurangzeb's career as an iconoclast and persecutor, but the Hindu record of persecution will not take us more than a few pages.

To my knowledge, all the alleged cases of intra-Hindu persecution have been summed up in "Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya by prof. R.S. Sharma, the chapter in Communalism and the Writing of Indian History" contributed by prof. Harbans Mukhia, and most explicitly Cultural Transactions and Early India by Prof. Romila Thapar. According to Romila Thapar, "the insistence on the tradition of religious tolerance and non-violence as characteristic of Hinduism... is not borne out by historical evidence". Given their strong motivation, we need not assume that they have overlooked incidents that could be useful for the case they are making.

The two best-known cases, involving Pushyamitra Shunga and Shashank, cannot withstand historical criticism. The non-contemporary story (which surfaces more than three centuries after the facts) about Pushyamitra's offering money for the heads of monks is rendered improbable by firm historical facts of his allowing and patronizing monasteries and Buddhist universities in his domains. After Ashoka's lavish sponsorship of Buddhism, it is perfectly possible that Buddhist institutions fell on slightly harder times under the Shungas, but persecution is still another matter. The famous historian of Buddhism Etienne Lamotte has observed: "To judge from the documents, Pushyamitra must be acquitted through lack of proof." The only reason to sustain the suspicion against Pushyamitra, once it has been levelled, is that "where there is smoke, there must be fire" - but that piece of received wisdom is presupposed in every act of slander as well.

Hsuan Tsang's story from hearsay about Shashank's devastating a monastery in Bihar, killing the monks and destroying Buddhist relics, only a few years before Hsuan Tsang's own arrival, is contradicted by other elements in his

own report. Thus, according to the Chinese pilgrim, Shashank threw a stone with the Buddha's footprint into the river, but it was returned through a miracle; and he felled the bodhi tree but a sapling from it was replanted which miraculously grew into a big tree overnight. So, the fact of the matter was that the stone and the tree were still there in full glory. In both cases, the presence of the footprint-stone and the fully grown bodhi tree contradict Hsuan Tsang's allegations, but he explains the contradiction away by postulating miracles (which everywhere have a way of mushrooming around relics, to add to their aura of divine power). If we do not accept miracles, we conclude that the bodhi tree which Hsuan Tsang saw, and which was too big to have been a recently replanted sapling, cannot have been felled by Shashank.

Hsuan Tsang is notorious for his exaggerations and his insertions of miracle stories, and he had to explain to China, where Buddhism was reaching its peak, why it was declining in India. It seems safer to base our judgement on the fact that in his description of Buddhist life in the Ganga basin, nothing shows the effects of recent persecutions. In fact, Hsuan Tsang himself gives a clue to the real reason of pre-Islamic Buddhist decline, by describing how many Buddhist monasteries had fallen into disuse, esp. in areas of lawlessness and weak government, indicating that the strength of Buddhism was in direct proportion to state protection and patronage. Unlike Brahminism, which could sustain itself against heavy odds, the fortunes of Buddhist monasticism (even more than those of the Christian abbeys in early medieval Europe) were dependent upon royal favours, as under Ashoka, the Chinese early T'ang dynasty, and the rulers of Tibet and several Southeast-Asian countries.

A third story, about a 12th century king Harsha of Kashmir, is apparently true but has nothing to do with religious persecution: he plundered Hindu temples of all sects including Buddhism, in his own kingdom, without bothering to desecrate them or their keepers apart from lucrative plunder. It is the one genuine case of a ruler plundering not out of religious motives but for the gold. There is no known case of a Muslim marauder who merely stole from temples without bothering to explicitly desecrate them, much less of a Muslim ruler who plundered the sanctuaries of his own religion. Moreover, Kalhana's history book *Rajatarangini* relates this story with the comment: "Promoted by the Turks in his employ, he behaved like a

Turk." This Harsha employed Turkish mercenaries (which his successors would regret, for they spied and ultimately grabbed power), and these Muslims already had a firm reputation of plundering temples with a good conscience.

Number four is the attack by the Paramara king Subhataverman (1193-1210) on Gujrat, in which "a large number of Jain temples in Dabhoi and Cambay" were plundered (not "destroyed" or "desecrated"). Harbans Mukhia cites this as proof that "many Hindu rulers did the same [as the Muslims, i.e. destroy] with temples in enemy- territory long before the Muslims had emerged as a political challenge to these kingdoms." However, it is well-known that when Subhatavarman acceded to the throne, the Muslims had more than emerged: North India was being ravaged by Mohammed Ghor's decisive campaign of conquest. As a proof that Hindus outside the Islamic sphere of influence practised persecution, this incident will not do. On the contrary, if the report is correct, then the background may well be similar to the attested case of Harsha of Kashmir: inspired by the Turks, he behaved like a Turk.

Another case is the recurrent conflicts between the Shaiva and the Vaishnava renunciates in Ayodhya. Prof. R.S. Sharma quotes a description from 1804, which talks of "soldiers taking pleasure in battle", "misery", "great fear" and "shelter in secret places", but no death toll is given, in fact no killing is mentioned in so many words. But prof. Sharma concludes nonetheless: "The passage given above is sufficient to expose the myth of tolerance practised by medieval Hindu religious leaders."

Hindu tradition acknowledges that a rivalry between Shaivas and Vaishnavas disturbed life in Ayodhya: it was the context in which Tulsidas decided to write the Ramcharitmanas. In order to emphasize the superficial and erroneous character of the conflict between the followers of Shiva and those of Vishnu (and his incarnation Rama), Tulsidas made Shiva the storyteller of his Rama biography. Shiva and Vishnu are one, and devotees who don't understand this, well, they have to learn it. There is no similar record of any Islamic authority who has said that Shiva and Allah are one, nor Ram and Rahim, nor Kashi and Kaaba. All this "oneness of all religions" rhetoric is a strictly Hindu projection of the oneness of the different Hindu gods and traditions on a juxtaposition of radically

incompatible notions from Islam and Hinduism. Whereas the opposition between Ram and Rahim, between Kashi and Kaaba, led to endless persecutions and a Partition, such things have not happened between Shaivas and Vaishnavas. All that Prof. Sharma can show, is a riot which was not bigger than those which take place between drunken football fans.

As we might expect from Marxists who seek to mould rather than inform public opinion, this listing of evidence has been done with some editing. Thus, Romila Thapar writes that "the Shaivite saint Jnana Sambandar is attributed with having converted the Pandya ruler from Jainism to Shaivism, whereupon it is said that 8,000 Jainas were impaled by the king". She omits that this king, Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman, is also described as having first persecuted Shaivas; that Sambandar vanquished the Jainas not in battle but in debate (upon which the king converted from Jainism to Shaivism); and that he had escaped Jaina attempts to kill him. Unlike the Muslim persecutions, this Shaiva-Jaina conflict was clearly not a one-way affair. For the sake of blackening Hinduism, the Buddhists and Jains had to be depicted as hapless victims, and their share in the intra- Hindu violence had to be concealed.

It is even a matter of debate whether this persecution has occurred at all: the Hindus were never careful historians, and like Hsuan Tsang they mixed legend and historical fact, so that the modern historian can only accept their testimony if he finds supportive outside (epigraphical and archaeological) evidence. Unlike the conscientious Muslim chronicles or Kalhana's Rajatarangini, this story about Sambandar comes in the form of a local legend with at most a historical core. Nilkanth Shastri, in his unchallenged History of South India, writes about it: "This, however, is little more than an unpleasant legend and cannot be treated as history." I admit that this sounds like Percival Spear's statement that Aurangzeb's persecutions are "little more than hostile legend". However, Mr. Spear's contention is amply disproven by a lot of contemporary documents including the royal orders to kill Pagans and destroy Pagan institutions, as well as by eye-witness accounts; such evidence has not been offered at all in the case of Jnana Sambandar.

Warned by this unmistakable case of distortion of evidence, we take the rest of the list cum grano salis. But at least, the next incident is reported by two seemingly independent sources: the persecution of Buddhists by the Huna

king Mihirakula in Kashmir. Romila Thapar herself admits that Hsuan Tsang's account about "the destruction of 1.600 Buddhist stupas and sangharamas and the killing of thousands of monks and lay-followers" sounds exaggerated, but she has faith in Kalhana's more detailed version which mentions "killing innocent people by the hundreds".

But Hsuan Tsang gives an interesting detail which does not sound like a fairy-tale and may well be historical. Mihirakula, "wishing to apply his leisure to the study of Buddhism", asked the Buddhist sangha to appoint a teacher for him. But none of the more accomplished monks was willing, so they appointed a monk who had the rank of a servant. The king found this procedure insulting, and ordered the destruction of the Buddhist church in his kingdom. This king was not anti-Buddhist, was open-minded and took a sincere interest in Buddhism. But once a king's ego is hurt, he can get violent, regardless of his religion. That is regrettable, but it is something else than religious fanaticism.

When a commander in the service of the Buddhist emperor Ashoka was angered by the Buddhist monks' refusal to let the king meddle in their affairs, he had 500 of them killed. The massacre had nothing to do with religious intolerance, merely with hurt pride, and the Marxist historians have done well not to put it in their list. For the same reason, Mihirakula's rage against the impolite monks cannot be equated with the religiously motivated persecutions by the Muslim rulers. There was never a Muslim king who invited Pagan scholars to instruct him in the Pagan doctrines, the way Mihirakula asked for a Buddhist teacher. The only exceptions to this rule were the apostate emperor Akbar, who was vehemently criticized for it by the Muslim clergy, and Dara Shikoh, who was executed for apostasy by his brother Aurangzeb.

Another incident of intra-Hindu persecution quoted from Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, is "an earlier persecution of Buddhists in Kashmir and the wilful destruction of a vihara, again by a Shaivite king". There is an interesting little tailpiece to this incident: "But on this occasion the king repented and built a new monastery for the Buddhist monks". This proves that a substantial number, if not all, of the monks had survived the persecution. But more importantly, it highlights something completely unknown in the long history of Islamic fanaticism: remorse. This Shaivite king knew at heart that intolerance was wrong, and when he had regained

his self-control, he made up for his misdeed. Such a thing has never been done by Mohammed, or by Ghaznavi or Aurangzeb. If any proof was needed for the radical difference between the systematic persecutions by the Muslims and the rare aberration into isolated acts of intolerance by Hindus, Prof. Romila Thapar has just given it.

The next case: "The Jaina temples of Karnataka went through a traumatic experience at the hands the Lingayats or Virashaivas in the early second millennium AD". If all they suffered was trauma they were well-off in comparison with the thousands of temples destroyed by the Muslims in the same period. After a time of peaceful co-existence, which Romila Thapar acknowledges, "one of the temples was converted into a Shiva temple. At Hubli, the temple of the five Jinas was converted into a panchalingeshwara Shaivite temple, the five lingas replacing the five Jinas in the sancta. Some other Jaina temples met the same fate."

To be sure, conversions of the temples have indeed happened, and the panchalingeshwara temple may well be a case in point. Yet, that does not prove there was persecution. When rivalling sects entered public debate, they often put in high wagers, esp. the promise to convert to be winner's sect. In such a case, the temple or ashram was taken along into the new sect. Here, it could well be such a case of peaceful handover: after all, the temples were not destroyed. Against this, Prof. Thapar informs us: "An inscription at Ablur in Dharwar eulogizes attacks on Jaina temples as retaliation for opposition to Shaivite worship."

Here we may have another case of distorting evidence by means of selective quoting. The inscription of which Prof. Thapar summarizes a selected part, says first of all that the dispute arose because the Jains tried to prevent a Shaiva from worshipping his own idol. It further relates that the Jains also promised to throw out Jina and worship Shiva if the Shiva devotee performed a miracle, but when the miracle was produced, they did not fulfil their promise. In the ensuing quarrel, the Jina idol was broken by the Shaivas. The most significant element is that the Jain king Bijjala decided in favour of the Shaivas when the matter was brought before him. He dismissed the Jains and showered favours on the Shaivas.

Again, in this story the conflict is not a one-way affair at all. We need not accept the story at face value, as it is one of those sectarian miracle stories

(with the message: "My saint is holier than thy saint") which abound in the traditions surrounding most places of pilgrimage, be they Christian, Sufi or Hindu. Dr. Fleet, who has edited and translated this inscription along with four others found at the same place, gives summaries of two Lingayat Puranas and the Jain Bijjalacharitra, and observes that the story in this inscription finds no support in the literary traditions of the two sects. Bijjala's own inscription dated 1162 AD discovered at Managoli also does not support the story. The fact that the inscription under consideration does not bear a date or a definite reference to the reign of a king, does not help its credibility either. And do authentic inscriptions deal in miracles?

It is obvious that an inscription of this quality, if it had been cited in support of the Hindu claim to the Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi site, would have been dismissed by the Marxist historians as ridiculous and totally groundless. They would not view it as a serious obstacle to their foregone conclusion that there is absolutely definitely no indication whatsoever at all that a Hindu temple was forcibly replaced with a mosque. But in this case, we are asked to see it as evidence that Shaivas attacked Jain temples, and that Hindu tolerance is a myth.

Unlike the party-line historians of JNU, I do not think that historians working with conflicting testimonies are in a position to make apodictic statements and definitive conclusions,, so I will not completely dismiss this inscription as fantasy. It is possible that the Jainas had indeed fallen on hard times, and I do not dispose of material that would refute Prof. Thapar's contention that "in the fourteenth century the harassment of Jainas was so acute that they had to appeal for protection to the ruling power at Vijayanagar". Still, in size, duration, intensity and degree of ideological motivation, this conflict does not at all compare with the terror wrought by Islam. Incidentally, the ruling power at Vijayanagar, whose protection the Jains sought, was of course a Hindu power.

From Dr. Fleet's study of these sources, it seems that the Shaivas who were so hostile to the Jains, belonged to the Veerashaiva or Lingayat sect. And indeed, Prof. Thapar's next piece of evidence is that "inscriptions of the sixteenth century from the Srisailam area of Andhra Pradesh record the pride taken by Veerashaivas in beheading Shvetambara Jains". Now, the Veerashaivas were an anti-caste and anti-Brahminical sect. As these are considered good qualities, negationists have tried to link them to the

influence of Muslim missionaries ("bringing the message of equality and brotherhood"), who were indeed very active on India's West coast, where and when the Veerashaiva doctrine was developed. Let us assume there was indeed Muslim influence on the Veerashaiva sect. In that case, the negationists should acknowledge that the Veerashaivas' occasional acts of intolerance may equally be due to the influence of Islam. At any rate Brahminism cannot be held guilty of any misdeeds committed by this anti-Brahminical sect.

Finally, "in Gujrat, Jainism flourished during the reign of Kumarapala, but his successor [i.e. Ajayapala] persecuted the Jainas and destroyed their temples". In "The History and Culture of the Indian People", edited by R.C. Majumdar, we read about this: "The Jain chronicles allege that Ajayapala was a persecutor of the Jains, that he demolished Jain temples, mercilessly executed the Jain scholar Ramachandra, and killed Ambada, a minister of Kumarapala, in an encounter." Here, the alleged crime is related by the victims, not by the aggressors. It is possible that they exaggerated, but I see no reason to believe that they simply invented the story. So, let us agree that some temples were destroyed and at least one prominent Jain killed by Hindu aggressors. After all, the fanaticism displayed systematically by Islam has not come falling out of the sky, it exists in human nature and may occasionally pop up in contexts of tension; the difference is that Hindu acts of fanaticism were occasional and took place in spite of the doctrine, while Islamic fanaticism was systematic and merely an application of the doctrine.

The Marxist scholars who have collected this material, have omitted from their presentations the following cases of intra-Hindu persecution. The Mahavamsa says that the Buddhist king Vattagamini (29-17 BC) destroyed a Jain vihara on the same site. In the Shravana-Belagola epitaph of Mallishena, the Jain teacher Aklanka says that after a successful debate with Buddhists, he broke a Buddha statue with his own foot. There are some more instances of Jain- Buddhist conflict, but such material did not fit in with the designs of the negationists. They have this pet theory of Jainism and Buddhism as revolts against Brahminical tyranny, subsequently crushed out by the Brahminical reaction. In fact, the minor instances of intra-Hindu violence were distributed roughly proportionately between Brahminical, Buddhist, Jaina and other sects.

Among the above-mentioned reports of conflict between the different traditions within the Sanatana Dharma common wealth, several are probably unfounded, and several exaggerated. But as we have no firm evidence for this plausible hypothesis yet, let us assume for now that all these reports are simply correct and accurate. Let us moreover assume that a similar number of similar cases has gone unrecorded or unnoticed by the Marxist historians. Then, as a sum total, we still do not have the number of victims that Teimur made in a single day. Then we still do not have the number of temple demolitions that Aurangzeb wrought on his own. Then we still do not have the amount of glorification of temple destruction that we find in any of the diaries of Muslim conquerors like Babr or Firuz Shah Tughlaq or Teimur, or any of their chroniclers. The fanaticism record of Hinduism throughout millennia is dwarfed by the record of a single Ghaznavi, Ghorī or Aurangzeb and becomes completely negligible when compared with the total record of Islamic destruction and massacre in India. Moreover, a proper comparison of the fanaticism record of Hindu civilization would not be with Indian Islam, which represents a far smaller number of people, but with the entire Muslim world from the Prophet (peace be upon him) onwards.

Prof. Romila Thapar writes: "The desire to portray tolerance and non-violence as the eternal values of the Hindu tradition has led to the pushing aside of such evidence." What evidence? These few disputable cases will not do to prove that "Hindu tolerance is a myth". Hindus can afford to face this evidence squarely. A final judgement on whether Hinduism is tolerant or not should not depend on a few instances selected and edited to fit the preconceived picture, but on an over-view of the whole of Hindu history. The larger patterns of Hindu history leave no doubt that the impression cunningly created by the negationists is false.

Many foreign groups of people persecuted for their religion came to seek refuge in India. The Parsis have thrived. The heterodox Syrian Christians have lived in peace until the Portuguese came to enlist them in their effort to christianize India. The Jews have expressed their gratitude when they left for Israel because India was the only country where their memories were not of persecution but of friendly co-existence. Even the Moplah Muslims were accepted without any questions asked. All these groups were not

merely tolerated, but received land and material support for building places of worship.

What should really clinch the issue, is the tolerant treatment which the Muslims received after their reign of terror had been overthrown and replaced with Hindu rashtras like those of the Marathas, Sikhs, Rajputs and Jats. The Hindus could have emulated the policy of the Spanish Christians after the Reconquista, and given the Muslims the choice between conversion and emigration. With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that they would have saved many lives and India's unity by doing so, but forcing people to convert was not in conformity with their traditions.

When negationists are confronted with the evidence of persecutions by Islam, they are sure to mention a few cases where Muslim rulers patronized the building of Hindu temples. In some cases this is deceitful: in the JNU historians' pamphlet "The Political Abuse of History", they mention three such cases, but on closer inspection two of them do not concern Muslim rulers, but their Hindu ministers (in his rebuttal, Prof. A.R. Khan called this "not only concealment of evidence but also distortion of evidence"). But all right, a few Muslim rulers have made gifts to Hindu institutions. The negationists insist that these few gifts make up for the systematic Islamic persecutions. By contrast, their blatantly unequal standards do not allow them to accept the systematic patronage of the institutions of Buddhists and Jains by Hindu kings through the ages as compensation for the few isolated and aberrant cases of religious conflict.

In order to understand the problem of religious intolerance, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of conflict between religions. The first one is the ordinary conflict between two groups of people, who may derive their identity from their nationality, language family stock, economic interests, social class, or allegiance to a football team: any two people or groups of people can pick a quarrel. Therefore, two religious communities can have a conflict of interest as well, and behave just like any kind of group in conflict situation. By definition, every community can run into this kind of conflict (though some may remain non-violent throughout because of their doctrine). But this kind of conflict is temporary, dependent on an accidental state of affairs and always gravitates back to normal.

The second kind of religious conflict is not accidental, but is a consequence of the doctrines to which the community adheres. This is the case only with a handful of religions (including the Marxist quasi-religion), distinguished by their exclusivism and their ambition for conquest. Islam has been the most consistent in denying others the right to exist or at least to freely practise their religion. Its conflicts with other religions are merely the materialization of its doctrines.

This distinction between religious conflict as an accident or aberration, and religious conflict as the direct outcome of fanatical doctrines inherent in a religion, is fundamental to an understanding of the problem. In the first case, acts of fanaticism are committed in spite of the doctrine. The Vedas say that "the wise call the One by many names", and exhort us to "let good thoughts come to us from everywhere"; in the Bhagavad Gita Krishna assures the adherents of all religions that "those who pray with devotion to any god, it is to Me that they pray". Differences in religion are considered superficial and unimportant, therefore religious tolerance is the norm, and intolerance cannot be more than an aberration. But in the second case, acts of fanaticism are sanctioned by the doctrine, and are bound to happen on a substantial scale as long as the doctrine is taken seriously. "Enmity and hatred will reign between us until ye believe in Allah alone" says the Quran, and it is only logical that enmity and hatred have indeed reigned between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Of course, those with a bad conscience go out of their way to blur this distinction. Marxists insist on disregarding or blurring the distinction either because they want to blacken all religion, or because they are in league with Muslim fanatics.

Among those who like to say that "all are equally guilty", we also find the Christian missionaries. They too have a history of persecutions and temple destructions to cover up, not only in Europe and America, but in India as well. The Portuguese organized a branch of the Inquisition in Goa, and they practised conversion by force on a large scale. The French and British missionaries were less brutal, often resorting to subversion tactics and inducement by means of material advantages for converts, but they too have a record of temple destructions in India. Hundreds of churches contain rubble of the Hindu temples which they replaced. We may look a bit more

closely into one case which sums it all up: the Saint Thomas church on Mylapore beach in Madras.

According to Christian leaders in India, the apostle Thomas came to India in 52 AD, founded the Syrian Christian church, and was killed by the fanatical Brahmins in 72 AD. Near the site of his martyrdom, the Saint Thomas church was built. In fact this apostle never came to India, and the Christian community in South India was founded by a merchant Thomas Cananeus in 345 AD (a name which readily explains the Thomas legend). He led 400 refugees who fled persecution in Persia and were given asylum by the Hindu authorities. In Catholic universities in Europe, the myth of the apostle Thomas going to India is no longer taught as history, but in India it is still considered useful. Even many vocal secularists who attack the Hindus for relying on myth in the Ayodhya affair, off-hand profess their belief in the Thomas myth. The important point is that Thomas can be upheld as a martyr and the Brahmins decried as fanatics.

In reality, the missionaries were very disgruntled that these damned Hindus refused to give them martyrs (whose blood is welcomed as the seed of the faith), so they had to invent one. Moreover, the church which they claim commemorates Saint Thomas' martyrdom at the hands of Hindu fanaticism, is in fact a monument of Hindu martyrdom at the hands of Christian fanaticism: it is a forcible replacement of two important Hindu temples (Jain and Shaiva), whose existence was insupportable to Christian missionaries. No one knows how many priests and worshippers were killed when the Christian soldiers came to remove the curse of Paganism from Mylapore beach. Hinduism doesn't practise martyr-mongering, but if at all we have to speak of martyrs in this context, the title goes to these Shiva-worshippers and not to the apostle Thomas.

So, applying the old maxim that "attack is the best defence", the spokesmen of intolerant creeds falsely accuse the tolerant Hindus of the same intolerance. While nobody claims that Hinduism is without faults, or that Hindu society has never brought forth fanatical individuals, it is a plain lie that Hinduism has record of fanaticism similar (however remotely) to that of the three world-conquerors: Christianity, Islam and Mrxism.

2.8 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM NEGATIONISM

India has its own full-fledged brand of negationism: a movement to deny the large-scale and long-term crimes against humanity committed by Islam. This movement is led by Islamic apologists and Marxist academics, and followed by all the politicians, journalists and intellectuals who call themselves secularists. In contrast to the European negationism regarding the Nazi acts of genocide, but similar to the Turkish negationism regarding the Armenian genocide, the Indian negationism regarding the terrible record of Islam is fully supported by the establishment. It has nearly full control of the media and dictates all state and government parlance concerning the communal problem (more properly to be called the Islam problem).

Its techniques are essentially the same as those of negationists elsewhere :

1. Head-on denial: The crassest form of negationism is obviously the simple denial of the facts. This is mostly done in the form of general claims, such as: "Islam is tolerant", "Islamic Spain was a model of multicultural harmony", "the anti-Jewish hatred was unknown among Muslims until Zionism and anti-Semitism together entered the Muslim world from Europe". Since it is rare that a specific crime of Islam is brought to the public's notice, there is little occasion to come out and deny specific crimes. Exceptions are the Armenian genocide, officially denied in Turkey and the entire Muslim world, and the temple destructions in India, which have been highlighted in the Ayodhya debate but flatly denied by Syed Shahanuddin, Sushil Srivastava and many other pro-Babri polemicists.

The Rushdie affair was the occasion for negationism on a grand scale. There happens to be an unambiguous answer to the question: "Is it Islamic to kill those who voice criticism of the Prophet?" According to the media and most experts, the answer was definitely: no. According to the basic traditions of Islam, it was: yes. Mohammed as well as his immediate successors have killed critics, both in formal executions and in night-time stabbings. In Islamic law, the Prophet's example is valid precedent. At most there could be some quarreling over the procedure: some jurists thought that Rushdie should first be kidnapped to an Islamic country and given a chance to recant before an Islamic court, though the ayatollahs have ruled that no amount of remorse can save

Rushdie. If he stands by his book, even the so-called moderates think he must be killed. Islamic law punishes both apostasy and insults to the Prophet with the death penalty: twice there is no escape for Rushdie. In the Muslim world, several publications have restated the clear-cut Islamic provisions for cases like Rushdie's including *Ahaanat-i Rasool ki Sazaa* ("Punishment for Insulting the Prophet") by JNU Prof. Maulana Mohsin Udmani Nadwi, and *Muqaddas-i Ayat* ("The Sacred Verses") by Maulana Majid Ali Khan, both published by the Islamic Research Foundation, Delhi. Yet, the outside public was told by many experts that killing Rushdie is un-islamic.

Flat denial will work very well if your grip on the press and education media is sufficient. Otherwise, there is a danger of being shown up as the negationist one really is. In that case, a number of softer techniques are available.

2. Ignoring the facts: This passive negationism is certainly the safest and the most popular. The media and textbook-writers simply keep the vast corpus of inconvenient testimony out of the readers' view.
3. Minimizing the facts: If the inconvenient fact is pointed out that numerous Muslim chroniclers have reported a given massacre of unbelievers themselves, one can posit a priori that they must have exaggerated to flatter their patron's martial vanity - as if it is not significant enough that Muslim rulers felt flattered by being described as mass-murderers of infidels.

Apart from minimizing the absolute size of Islamic crimes, there is the popular technique of relative minimizing: make the facts look smaller by comparing them with other, carefully selected facts. Thus, one can say that "all religions are intolerant", which sounds plausible to many though it is patently false: in the Roman Empire only those sects were persecuted which had political ambitions (Jews when they fought for independence, Christians because they sought to take over the Empire and outlaw all other religions, as they effectively did), while the others enjoyed the status of *religio licita*; similarly with the Persian Empire and many other states and cultures.

An oft-invoked counterweight for the charge-sheet against Islam, is the fanaticism record of Christianity. it is indeed well-known that

Christianity has been guilty of numerous temple destructions and persecutions. But the reason for this fanaticism is found in the common theological foundation of both religions: exclusivist prophetic monotheism. The case against Christianity is at once a case against Islam. Moreover, in spite of its theologically motivated tendency to intolerance, Christianity has had to go through the experience of "live and let live" because in its formative period, it was but one of the numerous sects in the pluralist Roman empire.

Islam never had this experience, and in order to bring out its full potential of fanaticism, Christianity has needed the influence of Islam on a few occasions. Thus, it is no coincidence that Charlemagne, who defeated the Saxons by force, was the grandson of Charles Martel, who defeated the Islamic army in Poitiers; no coincidence either that the Teutonic knights who forcibly converted the Balts, were veterans of the Crusades, i.e. the campaign to liberate Palestine from Islam; nor is it a coincidence that the Spanish Inquisition emerged in a country that had needed centuries to shake off Islamic oppression. Finally, Christianity is, by and large, facing the facts of its own history, though it is still struggling with the need to own up the responsibility for these facts.

An even more general way of drowning Islamic fanaticism in relativist comparisons, is to point out that after all, every imperialism has been less than gentle. That may well be true, but then, we are not setting up cults for the Genghis Khans of this world. A religion should contribute to man's transcending his natural defects like greed and cruelty, and not sanction and glorify them.

4. Whitewashing: When one cannot conceal, deny or minimize the facts, one can still claim that on closer analysis,, they are not as bad as they seem. One can call right what is obviously wrong. This can go very far, e.g. in his biography of Mohammed, Maxime Rodinson declared unashamedly that the extermination of the Medinese Jews by Mohammed was doubtlessly the best solution. In numerous popular introductions to Islam, the fact that Islam imposes the death penalty on apostates (in modern terminology: that Islam opposes freedom of religion in the most radical manner) is acknowledged; but then it is explained that "since Islam was at war with the polytheists, apostasy

equalled treason and desertion, something which is still punished with death in our secular society". All right, but the point is precisely that Islam chose to be at war with the traditional religion of Arabia, as also with all other religions, and that it has made this state of war into a permanent feature of its law system.

5. Playing up unrepresentative facts: A popular tactic in negationism consists in finding a positive but uncharacteristic event, and highlighting it while keeping the over-all picture out of the public's view. For instance, a document is found in which Christians whose son has forcibly been inducted in the Ottoman Janissary army, express pride because their son has made it made it to high office within this army. The fact that these people manage to see the bright side of their son's abduction, is then used to prove that non-muslims were quite happy under Muslim rule, and to conceal the fact that the devshirme, the forcible conversion and abduction of one fifth of the Christian children by the Ottoman authorities, constituted a constant and formidable terror bewailed in hundreds of heart-rending songs and stories.

For another example, negationists always mention cases of collaboration by non-Muslims (Man Singh with the Moghuls, etc.) to suggest that these were treated as partners and equals and that Muslim rule was quite benevolent; when in fact every history of an occupation, even the most cruel one, is also the history of a collaboration. As has been pointed out, the Nazis employed Jewish guards in the Warsaw ghetto, disprove the Nazi oppression of the Jews.

6. Denying the motive: Negationists sometimes accept the facts, but disclaim their hero's responsibility for them. Thus, Mohammed Habib tried to exonerate Islam by ascribing to the Islamic invaders alternative motives: Turkish barbarity, greed, the need to put down conspiracies brewing in temples. In reality, those rulers who had secular reasons to avoid an all-out confrontation with the unbelievers, were often reprimanded by their clerical courtiers for neglecting their Islamic duty. The same clerics were never unduly worried over possible secular motives in a ruler's mind as long as these prompted him to action against the unbelievers. At any rate, the fact that Islam could be

used routinely to justify plunder and enslavement (unlike, say, Buddhism), is still significant enough.

7. Smokescreen: Another common tactic consists in blurring the problem by questioning the very terms of the debate: "Islam does not exist, for there are many Islams, with big differences between countries etc." It would indeed be hard to criticize something that is so ill-defined. But the simple fact is that Islam does exist: it is the doctrine contained in the Quran, normative for all Muslims, and in the Hadis, normative at least for all Sunni Muslims. There are differences between the law schools concerning minor points, and of course there are considerable differences in the extent to which Muslims are effectively faithful to islamic doctrine, and correspondingly, the extent to which they mix it with un-islamic elements.
8. Blaming fringe phenomena: When faced with hard facts of Islamic fanaticism, negationists often blame them on some fringe tendency, now popularly known as fundamentalism. This is said to be the product of post-colonial frustration, basically foreign to genuine Islam. In reality, fundamentalists like Maulana Maudoodi and Ayatollah Khomeini knew their Quran better than the self-deluding secularists who brand them as bad Muslims. What is called fundamentalism is in fact the original Islam, as is proven by the fact that fundamentalists have existed since long before colonialism, e.g. the 13th century theologian Ibn Taimiya, who is still a lighthouse for today's Maudoodis, Turabis, Madanis and Khomeinis. When Ayatollah Khomeini declared that the goal of Islam is the conquest of all non-Muslim countries, this was merely a reformulation of Mohammed's long-term strategy and of the Quranic assurance that God has promised the entire world to Islam. In the case of communism, one can shift the blame from Marx to Lenin and Stalin, but Islamic terrorism has started with Mohammed himself.
9. Arguments ad hominem: If denying the evidence is not tenable, one can always distort it by means of selective quoting and imputing motives to the original authors of the source material; or manipulating quotations to make them say the opposite of the over-all picture which the original author has presented. Focus all attention on a few real or imagined flaws in a few selected pieces, and act as if the entire corpus

of evidence has been rendered untrustworthy. To extend the alleged untrustworthiness of one piece of evidence to the entire corpus of evidence, it is necessary to create suspicion against those who present the evidence: the implication is that they have a plan of history falsification, that this plan has been exposed in the case of this one piece of evidence, but that it is only logical that such motivated history falsifiers are also behind the concoction of the rest of the alleged evidence.

If the discussion of inconvenient evidence cannot be prevented, disperse it by raising other issues, such as the human imperfections which every victim of crimes against humanity inevitably has (Jewish harshness against the Palestinians, Hindu untouchability); describe the demand for the truth as a ploy to justify and cover up these imperfections. If the facts have to be faced at all, then blame the victim. If people ignore or refute your distorted version of history, accuse them of distortion and political abuse of history. Slander scholars whose testimony is inconvenient; impute political or other motives to them in order to pull the attention away from the hard evidence they present.

10. Slogans: Finally, all discussion can be sabotaged with the simple technique of shouting slogans: prejudice, myth, "racism/communalism". Take the struggle from the common battlefield of arguments into the opponent's camp: his self-esteem as a member of the civilized company that abhors ugly things like prejudice and communalism. After all, attack is the best defence.

After summing up the forms of negationism, we have to look into its causes. The following factors come to mind:

1. Orientalism and Islamology: After the medieval Christian pamphlets against "Mohammed the impostor", not much has been published thematizing the ideological and factual crimes of Islam. Books on, say, "slavery in Islam" are extremely rare: the raw information that could fill such a publication will have to be found in more general publications, in which Islam is only referred to in passing, often without the author's realizing the implications for an evaluation of

Islam. It is often said (when introducing "refutations of prejudice") that people always associate Islam with intolerance; but finding a book specifically devoted to the subject of Islamic intolerance will be harder. How many millions have been killed by Islam simply because they were non-Muslims? Nobody has yet tabulated the figures available to prepare a general estimate. We can only notice that critical research of Islam is not exactly encouraged, and that there is an increasing tendency to self-censorship regarding Islam criticism. In part, this is due to much delayed reaction against the long-abandoned Christian polemical approach.

Now that Islamic Studies departments in Europe are increasingly manned by Muslims and sponsored by Islamic foundations and states, as has been the case in India for long, the climate for critical studies of Islam is only worsening. When comparing the first (pre-World War 2) edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden, Netherlands) with the new edition, it is striking how critical observations have been ironed out. But even in the past, Islam has enjoyed a rather favourable treatment in academic circles. Thus, about Islamic slavery the prominent Dutch Islamologist C. Snouck-Hurgronje wrote in 1887 (i.e. thirty years after the Americans had waged a war to impose the abolition of slavery in their southern states, and some seventy years after its abolition in the colonies): "For most slaves their abduction was a blessing... They themselves are convicted that it is their enslavement that has for the first time made them human."

The political context of the growth phase of Islamology provides a part of the explanation. Mature colonialism was not waging war against Islam, but sought the co-operation of the established social forces in the colonized populations. The British co-operation with the Indian Muslims is well-known; it is epitomized by the founding in 1906 of the Muslim League, which sought to "inculcate loyalty to the British Empire in the Indian Muslims". In French West Africa, in the same period, Islam was accepted as a factor of social stability, and General Lyautey pursued a dream of a Franco-Islamic synthesis culture in Algeria. In the 1930s, in the last European attempt at fresh colonization, the Italian Fascists actively supported the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa. But already since 1853 the colonial powers had

been supporting the Caliphate against a Christian power, Czarist Russia, esp. in the Crimean War (a mistaken war if ever there was one), and this had strongly contributed to climate of benevolence towards the Muslim culture.

2. Church policy: Christianity has for centuries waged a lively polemic against Islam, with Raimundus Lullus as probably the most remarkable exponent. Recently, this criticism has subsided. Worse, polemical works by clerics have been withdrawn or kept unpublished (such as, early this century, Father Henri Lammens' paper arguing that Mohammed's revelations were a psychopathological phenomenon). One reason is that the Church is aware of the similarity between Jesus' and Mohammed's missions, so that a criticism of the foundations of Islam may backfire on Christianity. The second reason is the fear that Christians in the Muslim world would have to pay for even ideological attack on Islam (that is why Church polemicists save their sharpest words for harmless religions like Hinduism). This fear also motivates other Church policies, such as the non-recognition of the state of Israel.

Meanwhile, the face of the Church has changed. A small but significant event in the wake of the Second Vatican Council was the deletion from the Saints' calendar of Our Lady of the Redemption of Slaves, whose feast was on 24 September. In the Middle Ages, there was a special clerical order and a whole fund-raising network devoted to the redemption ("buying back") of Christian slaves held in Barbary. Until the 19th century, coastal villages in Italy had watchtowers to alarm the people when a ship of the slave-catching Barbarese pirates was in sight. The terror of Islamic slavery was a permanent feature of Christian history from the 7th till the 19th century, but now the Church is working hard to erase this memory.

Today, its pastors are the most fervent pleaders for the rights of Islam. Muslims in Europe are for them a substitute for the disappearing parish members. Separate Christian institutions, whose reason of existence is being questioned, find a new legitimacy in the fact that Islam in its turn is also opening separate schools, charities and even political parties. Islam has become a sister religion regularly praised as a religion of peace.

3. Anti-colonialism: One of the ideological guidelines of anti-colonialism was: "Of the (ex-)colonized, nothing but good must be said." Therefore, mentioning the colonialism and mass slavery practised by the Muslims had become undesirable.

Add to this general taboo the warning that Islam criticism effectively implies support to Israel, described by Maxime Rodinson as a "colonial settler-state". If one acknowledges that Islam has always oppressed the Jews, one accepts that Israel was a necessary refuge for the Jews fleeing not only the European but also the Islamic variety of anti-Judaisms. Let us not forget that decolonization was followed immediately by renewed discrimination of and attacks on the Jewish and Christian minorities, and that those Jews who could get out have promptly fled to Israel (or France, in the case of Algeria). It is no coincidence that these Sephardic Jews are mostly supporters of the hard- liners in Israel.

4. The enemy's enemy is a friend: Many people brought up as Christians, or as nominal Hindus, never outgrow their pubescent revolt against their parents' religion, and therefore automatically sympathize with every rival or opponent of the religion they have come to despise. Because Islam poses the most formidable threat, they like it a lot.
5. Leftism: In this century, Islam has come to be advertised as a naturally leftist "religion of equality". This line has been developed by Muslim apologists such as Mohammed Habib, and they have even taken it as a rationalization of the irrational claim that Mohammed was the "last Prophet": after all, as the "prophet of equality", he had brought the ultimate message upon which no improvement is possible. Sir Mohammed Iqbal, one of the fathers of Pakistan, had claimed that "Islam equals Communism plus Allah". The Iranian Ayatollahs, by contrast, and most of the vocal Muslims after the Soviet-Islamic war in Afghanistan, have restated the orthodox position that Communism is un-Islamic, not only because of its atheism but also because of its rejection of free enterprise; the current claim is that Islam provides a "better form of equality" than Communism.

Even while Communists were slaughtered in Islamic Iran, and even while political analysts classify the Islamist movements as "extreme

rightist", most leftists have kept on cultivating some sympathy for Islam. During the Lebanese civil war, they fed us news stories about "leftist Muslims, rightist Christians", "Islamoprogressive, christianoreactionnaire".

Negationism in India is practised with the most prowess by historians and writers who are under the spell of Marxism. Lenin had wanted to use the Muslims against the French and British colonialists, but what was a tactical alliance for Lenin became a love-affair for the Indian Communists. However, it would be wrong to expect that the collapse of Soviet Communism and the inevitable decline of Communism in India will automatically lead to the dissolution of negationism. It has become a bias and a thought-habit for many people who have only vaguely been influenced by Marxism. Children mostly survive their parents, and certain forms of negationism may survive Indian Marxism for some time, unless a serious effort is made to expose it on a grand scale.

6. Rightist traditionalism: There is also a rightist sympathy for Islam. An obvious point of agreement is of course anti-Judaism. A subtler basis for sympathy is the so-called traditionalist current, which was represented by the converts Rene Guenon and Frithjof Schuon, and still has a following: it has been idealizing Islam and esp. Sufism as the preserver of the age-old philosophia perennis against modernity. In Russia, some Slavophile anti-Western groups now seek an alliance with Islam against the impending Americanization of their society. In the U.S., Christian fundamentalists and Islamic organizations are increasingly creating common platforms to speak out against trends of moral decay (abortion, pornography, etc.). Some of these phenomena of traditionalist alliance-building are quite respectable, but they are nevertheless conducive to Islam negationism.
7. Hindu cowardice: Even among so-called militant Hindus, there is a shameful eagerness to praise Islam and deny its criminal record. E.g., during the Ayodhya movement, many Hindu leaders have been pleading that the Muslims should renounce the Ram Janmabhoomi site because "genuine Islam is against temple demolition", so that a mosque standing on a demolished temple is not in conformity with Islamic law. This was, of course, blatantly untrue: Islamic scripture

and history prove that destroying all expressions of unbelief and idolatry is a duty and an honour for Muslims. The doctrines that have led to the temple destructions including the one on Ram Janmabhoomi, are still being taught in all Islamic schools.

Apart from being untruthful, this Hindu appeal to "genuine Islam's tolerance" was also bad debating tactics: if you say that temple demolition was standard Islamic practice, and that what had happened in Ayodhya was merely the local application of the general rule, the onus is on the Babri advocates to prove that the Babri Masjid was an exception; but if you say that the Babri Masjid was an exception to the rule of Islamic tolerance, the onus is on you to prove that in this case, an exceptional and uncharacteristic incident had taken place. It was also bad bargaining tactics: if you say that the Babri Masjid was merely one among thousands, then renouncing this one non-mosque would sound like a very low price for the Muslims to buy the Hindus' goodwill; but if you say that the Babri Masjid was an exceptional case, an insignificant incident amid the many big problems thrown up by history, you look petty by demanding the restoration of this one site. Short, Hindu leaders were damaging their own position by denying history and avoiding Islam criticism.

One could understand people telling lies when it serves their own interest; but people who tell lies when it is the truth that would serve their interest, really deserve to be kicked around. This truly strange and masochistic behaviour can only be understood if we keep in mind that Hindu society is a terrorized society. During the Muslim period, all those who stood up and spoke out against Islam were eliminated; and under Nehruvian rule, they were sidelined and abused. The oppressed Hindus started licking the boot that kicked them, and this has become a habit which in their slumber they have not yet identified and stopped.

8. Liberal Islam: In the Islamic world, it is unwise to attack Islam head-on. Yet, sometimes people in those countries feel the need to oppose Islamic phenomena and campaigns, such as the witch-hunt on un-Islamic cultural remnants, violence on the non-Muslims, extreme forms of gender inequality. In order to have a chance, these people have to use Islamic language: "Mohammed was actually against polygamy", "violence against others is in conflict with the tolerance

which Mohammed has taught us", "respect for other cultures is part of Islamic tradition". In order to press their humanist point, they have to formally identify with Islam and lie about its contents.

Many Muslims have started to believe their own rhetoric. If you point out to them that the Quran teaches intolerance and war against the unbelievers in the most explicit terms, many of them will sincerely protest, and not know what to say when you show them the Quranic passages concerned. There is no reason to doubt that the Moroccan authoress Fatima Mernissi genuinely believes in her own argument that the Quranic instructions on how to organize your polygamous household are to be read as an abolition of polygamy (albeit in veiled terms, because Allah, the same Allah Almighty who went straight against the prevalent customs of idolatry and pluralism, had to be careful not to offend the spirit of the times). Many nominal Muslims have outgrown Islamic values and developed a commitment to modern values, but their sentimental attachment to the religion imbibed in their childhood prevents them from formally breaking with Islam and makes them paint a rosy picture of it.

Among Muslim spokesmen, it is certainly not the fundamentalists who are the most active proponents of negationism. It is liberals like Asghar Ali Engineer who deny that Islam ordains war on the infidels. It is those who are acclaimed by Hindus as being good "secular" Muslims, like Saeed Naqvi, who go as far as to deny that the Partition of India was brought about by Muslims. An Islam that wants to be secular, cannot but be dishonest and untrue to itself. Unfortunately, a tolerant Islam is a contradiction, and a tolerant past for Islam to buttress the position of liberal Muslims, is a lie.

9. Muslims differing from Islam: Many people have a Muslim neighbour who is a fine man, and from this empirical fact they conclude: Islam cannot be all that bad considering our friend Mustapha. This one empirical fact gives them a tremendous resistance against all information about Islamic intolerance. People usually reduce the world to their own sphere of experience, and general historical facts of Islamic fanaticism are not allowed to disturb the private experience of good neighbourly relations.

Many nominal Muslims have retained from their Quran classes only some vague generalities about morality, and they normally go by their own conscience and sensibility without ever developing the doctrinally prescribed hostility towards non-Muslims. These good people but had Muslims can ignore but not change Islamic doctrine. They cannot prevent the Quranic message of hatred from infecting at least some of the more susceptible among their brethren.

There have certainly been situations where sane Muslims have calmed down their more riotous brethren, and such individuals do make a real difference. We should not make the Islamic mistake of judging people simply by their belonging or not belonging to the Muslim community, rather than by their human qualities. But the fact remains that the presence of a doctrine of intolerance as the official and identity-defining ideology of a community, exerts a constant pressure tending towards separatism and confrontation. The alleviating presence of the humanist factor even within the Muslim community should not be used to deny the ominous presence of Islamic factor.

"Those who deny history are bound to repeat it": that is what many critics of Holocaust negationism allege. This seems slightly exaggerated, though it is of course the well-wishers of Nazism who practise negationism. In the case of Islam, it is equally true that negationism is practised by the well-wishers of that same doctrine which has led to the crimes against humanity under consideration. While Nazism is simply too stained to get a second chance, Islam is certainly in a position to force unbelievers into the zimmi status (as is happening in dozens of Muslim countries in varying degrees), and even to wage new jihads, this time with weapons of mass-destruction. Those who are trying to close people's eyes to this danger by distorting or concealing the historical record of Islam are effective accomplices in the injustice and destruction which Islam is sure to cause before the time of its dissolution comes. Therefore, I consider it a duty of all intellectuals to expose and denounce the phenomenon of negationism whenever it is practised.

CHAPTER TWO - NEGATIONISM IN INDIA

The negationism regarding the Nazi crimes has been the object of much public discussion. Turkish negationism about the Armenian genocide has received some attention. Less well-known is that India has its own brand of negationism.

Since about 1920 an effort has been going on in India to rewrite history and to deny the millennium-long attack of Islam on Hinduism. Today, most politicians and English-writing intellectuals in India will go out of their way to condemn any public reference to this long and painful conflict in the strongest terms. They will go to any length to create the illusion of a history of communal amity between Hindus and Muslims.

2.1 HINDU VS. MUSLIM

Making people believe in a history of Hindu-Muslim amity is not an easy task: the number of victims of the persecutions of Hindus by Muslims is easily of the same order of magnitude as that of the Nazi extermination policy, though no one has yet made the effort of tabulating the reported massacres and proposing a reasonable estimate of how many millions exactly must have died in the course of the Islamic campaign against Hinduism (such research is taboo). On top of these there is a similar number of abductions and deportations to harems and slave-markets, as well as centuries of political oppression and cultural destruction.

The American historian Will Durant summed it up like this: "The Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilization is a precious good, whose delicate complex of order and freedom, culture and peace, can at any moment be overthrown by barbarians invading from without or multiplying within."

Only off and on did this persecution have the intensity of a genocide, but it was sustained much longer and spread out much wider geographically than the Nazi massacre. Whereas the Germans including most members of the Nazi party, were horrified at the Nazi crimes against humanity within a few years, the Muslims, for whom Gott mit uns (God with us) was not a slogan but a religious certainty, managed to keep a good conscience for centuries. We will encounter similarities as well as differences between Nazi and Islamic crimes against humanity, but the most striking difference is definitely the persistence with which Islamic persecutions have continued for 14 centuries. This is because it had more spine, a more powerful psychological grip on its adherents than Nazism.

The ideological foundation of the Islamic campaign was similar to the Nazi ideology. The Muslim invaders (as we can read in numerous documents which they left us, from the Quran and the Hadith onwards) distinguished between three kinds of people: first of all the Muslims, the Herrenvolk (master nation) to which Allah had promised the world; secondly the Jews and Christians, who could live on under Muslim rule but only as third-class citizens, just like the Slavic Untermenschen (inferior people) in Hitler's

planned new order, thirdly the species to be eliminated, the real Pagans who had to disappear from the face of the earth.

Different from Hitler's victims, the non-combatants among the unbelievers often got a chance to opt for conversion rather than death. What Mohammed (imitated by his successors) wanted, was his recognition as God's final prophet, so he preferred people to live and give him this recognition (by pronouncing the Islamic creed, i.e. converting), and only those who refused him this recognition were to be killed. Still, conversion often came too late to save defeated Pagans from slavery. At this point, Mohammed deserves comparison with Stalin: unlike Hitler, he killed people not for their race but for their opinions. But one can hardly say that the one totalitarianism is better than the other.

The Blitzkrieg of the Muslim armies in the first decades after the birth of their religion had such enduring results precisely because the Pagan populations in West- and Central-Asia had no choice (except death) but to convert. Whatever the converts' own resentment, their children grew up as Muslims and gradually identified with this religion. Within a few generations the initial resistance against these forcible conversions was forgotten, and these areas became heidenfrei (free from Pagans, cfr. judenfrei). In India it didn't go like that, because the Muslims needed five centuries of attempts at invasion before they could catch hold of large parts of India, and even then they encountered endless resistance, so that they often had to settle for a compromise.

The Muslim conquests, down to the 16th century, were for the Hindus a pure struggle of life and death. Entire cities were burnt down and the populations massacred, with hundreds of thousands killed in every campaign, and similar numbers deported as slaves. Every new invader made (often literally) his hills of Hindus skulls. Thus, the conquest of Afghanistan in the year 1000 was followed by the annihilation of the Hindu population; the region is still called the Hindu Kush, i.e. Hindu slaughter. The Bahmani sultans (1347-1480) in central India made it a rule to kill 100,000 captives in a single day, and many more on other occasions. The conquest of the Vijayanagar empire in 1564 left the capital plus large areas of Karnataka depopulated. And so on.

As a contribution to research on the quantity of the Islamic crimes against humanity, we may mention Prof. K.S.Lal's estimates about the population figures in medieval India (Growth of Muslim Population in India).

According to his calculations, the Indian (subcontinent) population decreased by 80 million between 1000 (conquest of Afghanistan) and 1525 (end of Delhi Sultanate). More research is needed before we can settle for a quantitatively accurate evaluation of Muslim rule in India, but at least we know for sure that the term crime against humanity is not exaggerated.

But the Indian Pagans were far too numerous and never fully surrendered. What some call the Muslim period in Indian history, was in reality a continuous war of occupiers against resisters, in which the Muslim rulers were finally defeated in the 18th century. Against these rebellious Pagans the Muslim rulers preferred to avoid total confrontation, and to accept the compromise which the (in India dominant) Hanifite school of Islamic law made possible. Alone among the four Islamic law schools, the school of Hanifa gave Muslim rulers the right not to offer the Pagans the sole choice between death and conversion, but to allow them toleration as zimmi (protected ones) living under 20 humiliating conditions, and to collect the jizya (toleration tax) from them. Normally the zimmi status was only open to Jews and Christians (and even that concession was condemned by jurists of the Hanbalite school like Ibn Taymiya), which explains why these communities have survived in Muslim countries while most other religions have not. On these conditions some of the higher Hindu castes could be found willing to collaborate, so that a more or less stable polity could be set up. Even then, the collaboration of the Rajputs with the Moghul rulers, or of the Kayasthas with the Nawab dynasty, one became a smooth arrangement when enlightened rulers like Akbar (whom orthodox Muslims consider an apostate) cancelled these humiliating conditions and the jizya tax.

It is because of Hanifite law that many Muslim rulers in India considered themselves exempted from the duty to continue the genocide on the Hindus (self-exemption for which they were persistently reprimanded by their mullahs). Moreover, the Turkish and Afghan invaders also fought each other, so they often had to ally themselves with accursed unbelievers against fellow Muslims. After the conquests, Islamic occupation gradually lost its character of a total campaign to destroy the Pagans. Many Muslim rulers preferred to enjoy the revenue from stable and prosperous kingdoms,

and were content to extract the jizya tax, and to limit their conversion effort to material incentives and support to the missionary campaigns of sufis and mullahs (in fact, for less zealous rulers, the jizya was an incentive to discourage conversions, as these would mean a loss of revenue). The Moghul dynasty (from 1526 onwards) in effect limited its ambition to enjoying the zimma system, similar to the treatment of Jews and Christians in the Ottoman empire. Muslim violence would thenceforth be limited to some slave-taking, crushing the numerous rebellions, destruction of temples and killing or humiliation of Brahmins, and occasional acts of terror by small bands of raiders. A left-over from this period is the North-Indian custom of celebrating weddings at midnight: this was a safety measure against the Islamic sport of bride-catching.

The last jihad against the Hindus before the full establishment of British rule was waged by Tipu Sultan at the end of the 18th century. In the rebellion of 1857, the near-defunct Muslim dynasties (Moghuls, Nawabs) tried to curry favour with their Hindu subjects and neighbours, in order to launch a joint effort to re-establish their rule. For instance, the Nawab promised to give the Hindus the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid site back, in an effort to quench their anti-Muslim animosity and redirect their attention towards the new common enemy from Britain. This is the only instance in modern history when Muslims offered concessions to the Hindus; after that, all the concessions made for the sake of communal harmony were a one-way traffic from Hindu to Muslim.

After the British had crushed the rebellion of 1857, the Indian Muslims fell into a state of depression, increasing backwardness due to their refusal of British education, and nostalgia for the past. While the Hindu elites took to Western notions like secular nationalism, the Muslims remained locked up in their communal separateness. As soon as the British drew them into the political process (founding of Muslim League in 1906) in order to use them as a counter-weight against the Indian National Congress, they immediately made heavy and hurtful demands on the Hindus, such as the unlimited right to slaughter cows, and they started working for political separation. First they obtained separate electorates where Muslim candidates would only have to please Muslim voters, and later they would succeed in separating a Muslim state from India.

By the twenties, they took to the unscrupled use of muscle power in a big way, creating street riots and outright pogroms. If Hindus retaliated in kind, it was a welcome help in instilling the separate communal identity into the ordinary Muslim, who would have preferred to coexist with his Hindu neighbours in peace. By creating riots and provoking retaliatory violence, the Muslim League managed to swing the vast majority of the Muslim electorate towards supporting its demand for the partition of India. The roughly 600,000 victims of the violence accompanying the Partition were the price which the Muslim League was willing to pay for its Islamic state of Pakistan. While every Hindu and Muslim who took part in the violence is responsible for his own excesses, the over-all responsibility for this mass-slaughter lies squarely with the Muslim leadership.

After independence, the Islamic persecution of Hindus has continued in different degrees of intensity, in Pakistan, Bangla Desh and Kashmir (as well as heavy discrimination in Malaysia). This is not the place for detailing these facts, which the international media have been ignoring completely. What may cut short all denials of this continued pestering of Hindus in Muslim states, are the resulting migration figures: in 1948, Hindus formed 23% of the population of Bangla Desh (then East Pakistan), in 1971 the figure was down to 15%, and today it stands at about 8%. No journalist or human rights body goes in to ask the minority Hindus for their opinion about the treatment they get from the Muslim authorities and populations; but they vote with their feet.

In the first months of 1990, the entire Hindu population (about 2 lakhs) was forcibly driven from the Kashmir Valley, which used to be advertised as a showpiece of communal harmony. Muslim newspapers and mosque loudspeakers had warned the Hindus to leave the valley or face bullets. After the Islamic conquest of Kabul in April 1992, 50,000 Hindus had to flee Afghanistan (with the Indian government unwilling to extend help, and Inder Kumar Gujral denying that the expulsion of Indians had a communal motive). The pogroms in Pakistan and Bangladesh after the demolition of the Babri Masjid left 50,000 Hindus homeless in Bangladesh and triggered another wave of refugees from both countries towards India. In Pakistan, 245 Hindu temples were demolished, in Bangladesh a similar number was attacked, and even in England some temples were set on fire by Muslim

mobs. And then we haven't even mentioned the recurrent attacks on Hindu processions and on police stations.

It will now be evident that the Hindu psyche has very little sympathy for Islam. Doing something about this was the chief motive for negationism.

2.2 NEGATIONISM AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The political context of the first attempts at negationism was chiefly the attempt of the independence movement, led by the Indian National Congress, to eliminate all factors of disunity between Hindus and Muslims. It was the time of the Khilafat movement (1919-23), the agitation of Indian Muslims against the British take-over of the Islamic sacred places from the deceased Ottoman empire. The khilafatists demanded the restoration of the Ottoman caliph's authority over the sacred places. Congress saw in this the occasion to enlist the Muslims in the national freedom struggle against the same British imperialists.

This was a miscalculation: the khilafat movement intensified the Islamic sense of communal identity (therefore the rejection of Indian nationalism), and added considerably to Muslim separatism and the Pakistan ideology. But before 1923, when the Turks themselves abolished the caliphate so that the movement lost its *raison d'être* (and got transmuted into pogroms against the Hindus), there was great expectation in Congress circles. Therefore, Congress people were willing to go to any length to iron out the differences between Hindus and Muslims, including the invention of centuries of communal amity.

At that time, the Congress leaders were not yet actively involved in the rewriting of history. They were satisfied to quietly ignore the true history of Hindu-Muslim relations. After the communal riots of Kanpur in 1931, a Congress report advised the elimination of the mutual enemy- image by changing the contents of the history-books.

The next generation of political leaders, especially the left-wing that was to gain control of Congress in the thirties, and complete control in the fifties, would profess negationism very explicitly. The radical humanist (i.e. bourgeois Marxist) M.N. Roy wrote that Islam had fulfilled a historic mission of equality and abolition of discrimination, and that for this, Islam had been welcomed into India by the lower castes. If at all any violence had occurred, it was as a matter of justified class struggle by the progressive forces against the reactionary forces, meaning the feudal Hindu upper castes.

This is a modern myth springing from an incorrect and much too grim picture of the caste system, a back-projection of modern ideas of class

struggle, and an uncritical swallowing of contemporary Islamic apologetics, which has incorporated some vogueish socialist values. There is no record anywhere of low-caste people welcoming the Muslims as liberators. Just like in their homeland, the Muslim generals had nothing but contempt for the common people, and all the more so because these were idolaters. They made no distinction between rich Pagans and poor Pagans: in the Quran, Allah had promised the same fate to all idolaters.

By contrast, there is plenty of testimony that these common people rose in revolt, not against their high-caste co-religionists, but against the Muslim rulers. And not only against heavy new taxes (50% of the land revenue for Alauddin Khilji, whom the negationists hail as the precursor of socialism) and land expropriations, but especially against the rape and abduction of women and children and the destruction of their idols, acts which have been recorded with so much glee by the Muslim chroniclers, without anywhere mentioning a separate treatment of Hindu rich and Hindu poor, upper-caste Kafir or low-caste Kafir. Even when some of the high-caste people started collaborating, the common people gave the invaders no rest, attacking them from hiding-places in the forests. The conversion of low-caste people only began when Muslim rulers were safely in power and in a position to reward and encourage conversion by means of tax discrimination, legal discrimination (win the dispute with your neighbour if you convert), handing out posts to converts, and simple coercion. Nevertheless, the myth which M.N. Roy spread, has gained wide currency.

The best-known propounder of negationism was certainly Jawaharlal Nehru. He was rather illiterate concerning Indian culture and history, so his admirers may invoke for him the benefit of doubt. At any rate, his writings contain some crude cases of glorification of Muslim tyrants and concealment or denial of their crimes. Witness his assessment of Mahmud Ghaznavi, who, according to his chronicler Utbi, sang the praise of the temple complex at Mathura and then immediately proceeded to destroy it. Nehru writes: "Building interested Mahmud, and he was much impressed by the city of Mathura near Delhi". About this he wrote: "There are here a thousand edifices as firm as the faith of the faithful; nor is it likely that this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of dinars, nor could such another be constructed under a period of 200 years." And that is all: Nehru described the destroyer of Mathura as an

admirer of Mathura, apparently without noticing the gory sarcasm in Ghaznavi's eulogy.

Moreover, Nehru denied that Mahmud had committed his acts of destruction out of any religious motive: "Mahmud was not a religious man. He was a Mohammedan, but that was just by the way. He was in the first place a soldier, and a brilliant soldier." That Mahmud was definitely a religious man, and that he had religious motives for his campaigns against the Hindus, is quite clear from Utbi's contemporary chronicle. Every night Mahmud copied from the Quran for the benefit of his soul. He risked his life several times for the sake of destroying and desecrating temples in which there was nothing to plunder, just to terrorize and humiliate the Pagans. In his campaigns, he never neglected to invoke the appropriate Quran verses. In venerating Mahmud as a pious hero of Islam, Indian Muslims are quite faithful to history: unlike Nehru, the ordinary Muslim refuses to practise negationism.

With Nehru, negationism became the official line of the Indian National Congress, and after Independence also of the Indian state and government.

2.3 THE ALIGARH SCHOOL

A second factor in the genesis of negationism was the penetration of Western ideas among a part of the Muslim elite, and especially the (in Europe newly emerged) positive valuation of tolerance. The Islamic elite was concentrated around two educational institutes, spearheads of the traditional and of the (superficially) westernizing trends among Indian Muslims. One was the theological academy at Deoband, the other the British-oriented Aligarh Muslim university.

The Deoband school was (and is) orthodox-Islamic, and rejected modern values like nationalism and democracy. It simply observed that India had once been a Dar-ul-Islam (house of Islam), and that therefore it had to be brought back under Muslim control. The fact that the majority of the population consisted of non-Muslims was not important: in the medieval Muslim empires the Muslims had not been in a majority either, and moreover, demography and conversion could yet transform the Muslim minority into a majority.

Among the scions of the Deoband school we find Maulana Maudoodi, the chief ideologue of modern fundamentalism. He opposed the Pakistan scheme and demanded the Islamization of all of British India. After independence, he settled in Pakistan and agitated for the full Islamization of the (still too British) polity. Shortly before his death in 1979, his demands were largely met when general Zia launched his Islamization policy.

Outsiders will be surprised to find that the same school of which Maudoodi was a faithful spokesman, also brought forth Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was Congress president for several terms and who was to become minister of Education in free India. Understandably but unjustifiably, Azad has often been described as a moderate and nationalist Muslim: he rejected the Partition of India and the foundation of Pakistan, not because he rejected the idea of a Muslim state, but because he wanted all of India to become a Muslim state in time.

When in the forties the Partition seemed unavoidable, Azad patronized proposals to preserve India's unity, stipulating that half of all members of parliament and of the government had to be Muslims (then 24% of the population), with the other half to be divided between Hindus, Ambedkarites, Christians, and the rest. Short, a state in which Muslims

would rule and non-Muslims would be second-class citizens electorally and politically. The Cabinet Mission Plan, proposed by the British as the ultimate sop for the Muslim League, equally promised an effective parity between Muslims and non-Muslims at the Central Government level and a veto right for the Muslim minority. Without Gandhiji's and other Congress leaders' knowing, Congress president Azad assured the British negotiators that he would get the plan accepted by the Congress. When he was caught in the act of lying to the Mahatma about the plan and his assurance, he lost some credit even among the naive Hindus who considered him a moderate. But he retained his position of trust in Nehru's cabinet, and continued his work for the ultimate transformation of India into a Muslim State.

Maulana Azad's pleas for Hindu-Muslim co-operation had an esoteric meaning, clear enough for Muslims but invisible for wilfully gullible non-Muslims like his colleagues in the Congress leadership. Azad declared that Hindu-Muslim co-operation was in complete conformity with the Prophet's vision, for "Mohammed had also made a treaty with the Jews of Madina". He certainly had, but the practical impact of this treaty was that within a few years, two of the three Jewish clans in Medina had been chased away, and the third clan had been massacred to the last man (the second clan had only been saved by the intervention of other Medinese leaders, for Mohammed had wanted to kill them too). Maulana Azad could mention Mohammed's treaty with the Jews as a model for Hindu-Muslim co-operation only because he was confident that few Hindus were aware of the end of the story, and that better-informed Hindus honoured a kind of taboo on criticism of Islam and its Prophet.

This parenthesis about Maulana Azad may help clear up some illusions which Hindus and Westerners fondly entertain about the possibility of Islamic moderacy. The Deoband school was as fundamentalist in its Azad face as it was in its Maudoodi heart, and its spokesmen had no problems with the horrors of Islamic history, nor did they make attempts to rewrite it. That Muslims had persecuted and massacred Hindus, counted as the fulfilment of Allah's salvation plan to transform the whole world into a Dar-ul-Islam. As Mohammed Iqbal wrote: "All land belongs to the Muslims, because it belongs to their God." (Iqbal would, however, end up in the Aligarh camp, cfr. *infra*) Maulana Azad shared this view of history. He condemned Moghul emperor Akbar's tolerant rule as the near-suicide of

Indian Islam, and praised fanatics like the theologian Ahmad Sirhindi, who through his opposition to Akbar's tolerance had brought the Moghul dynasty back on the right track of Hind-persecution.

Unlike the Deoband school, the Aligarh school tried to reconcile Islam with modern culture. It understood the principles of democracy and majority rule, and recognized that a modern democracy would be incompatible with the transformation of India into an Islamic state as long as Muslims only formed a minority. The tactical opposition against the disadvantageous system of democracy was underpinned ideologically by Mohammed Iqbal, who criticized it as a system in which heads are counted but not weighed. But Iqbal understood that democracy was the wave of the near future, and, together with more modern and sincerely democracy-minded people in the Muslim intelligentsia, he faced the logical consequence that the Muslims had to give up the ambition of gaining control over all of India immediately. Instead they should create a separate state out of the Muslim-majority areas of India: Pakistan. The ideal of Pakistan was launched by Iqbal in 1930, and in 1940 it became the official political goal of the Muslim League. Aligarh Muslim University has often been described as the cradle of Pakistan.

From their better knowledge of and appreciation for modern culture, the Aligarh thinkers accepted the modern value of religious tolerance. Not to the extent that they would be willing to co-exist with the Hindus in a single post-colonial state, but at least to this extent that they wanted to do something about the image of intolerance which Islam had come to carry. Around 1920 Aligarh historian Mohammed Habib launched a grand project to rewrite the history of the Indian religious conflict. The main points of his version of history are the following.

Firstly, it was not all that serious. One cannot fail to notice that the Islamic chroniclers (including some rulers who wrote their own chronicles, like Teimur and Babar) have described the slaughter of Hindus, the abduction of their women and children, and the destruction of their places of worship most gleefully. But, according to Habib, these were merely exaggerations by court poets out to please their patrons. One wonders what it says about Islamic rulers that they felt flattered by the bloody details which the Muslims chroniclers of Hindu persecutions have left us. At any rate, Habib has never managed to underpin this convenient hypothesis with a single fact.

Secondly, that percentage of atrocities on Hindus which Habib was prepared to admit as historical, is not to be attributed to the impact of Islam, but to other factors. Sometimes Islam was used as a justification post factum, but this was deceptive. In reality economic motives were at work. The Hindus amassed all their wealth in temples and therefore Muslim armies plundered these temples.

Thirdly, according to Habib there was also a racial factor: these Muslims were mostly Turks, savage riders from the steppes who would need several centuries before getting civilized by the wholesome influence of Islam. Their inborn barbarity cannot be attributed to the doctrines of Islam.

Finally, the violence of the Islamic warriors was of minor importance in the establishment of Islam in India. What happened was not so much a conquest, but a shift in public opinion: when the urban working-class heard of Islam and realized it now had a choice between Hindu law (smṛti) and Muslim law (shariat), it chose the latter.

Mohammed Habib's excise in history-rewriting cannot stand the test of historical criticism on any score. We can demonstrate this with the example of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (997-1030), already mentioned, who carried out a number of devastating raids in Sindh, Gujrat and Punjab. This Ghaznavi was a Turk, certainly, but in many respects he was not a barbarian: he patronized arts and literature (including the great Persian poet Firdausi, who would end up in trouble because his patron suspected him of apostasy, and the Persian but Arabic-writing historian Albiruni) and was a fine calligraphist himself. The undeniable barbarity of his anti-Hindu campaigns cannot be attributed to his ethnic stock. His massacres and acts of destruction were merely a replay of what the Arab Mohammed bin Qasim had wrought in Sindh in 712-15. He didn't care for material gain: he left rich mosques untouched, but poor Hindu temples met the same fate at his hands as the richer temples. He turned down a Hindu offer to give back a famous idol in exchange for a huge ransom: "I prefer to appear on Judgement Day as an idol-breaker rather than an idol-seller." The one explanation that covers all the relevant facts, is that he was driven to his barbarous acts by his ideological allegiance to Islam.

There is no record of his being welcomed by urban artisans as a liberator from the oppressive Hindu social system. On the contrary, his companion

Albiruni testifies how all the Hindus had an inveterate aversion for all Muslims.

Another ruler, Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1351-88), personally confirms that the destruction of Pagan temples was done out of piety, not out of greed: "The Hindus had accepted the zimmi status and the concomitant jizya tax in exchange for safety. But now they built idol temples in the city, in defiance of the Prophet's law which forbids such temples. Under divine leadership I destroyed these buildings, and killed the leaders of idolatry, and the common followers received physical chastisement, until this abomination had been banned completely." When Firuz heard that a Pagan festival was going on, he reacted forcefully: "My religious feelings exhorted me to finish off this scandal, this insult to Islam. On the day of the festival I went there myself, I ordered the execution of the leaders and practitioners of this abomination... I destroyed their idol temples and built mosques in their places."

The contention that Hindus stored their riches in temples is completely plucked out of thin air (though some of the richer temples contained golden statues, which were temple property): it is one among many ad hoc hypotheses which make Habib's theory a methodologically indefensible construction. In fact, Habib is proclaiming a grand conspiracy theory: all the hundreds of Islamic authors who declared unanimously that what they reported was a war of Islam against Infidelity, would all have co-ordinated one single fake scenario to deceive us.

This is not to say that the entire report which the Muslim chroniclers have left us, should be accepted at face value. For instance, writers like Ghaznavi's contemporary Utbi give the impression that the raids on, and ultimate conquest of Hindustan were a walk-over. Closer study of all the source material shows that the Muslim armies had a very tough time in India. From Muslim chronicles one only gets a faint glimpse of the intensity with which the Hindus kept on offering resistance, and of the precariousness of the Muslim grip on Hindistan through the Muslim period. The Muslim chroniclers have not been caught in the act of lying very often, but some of them distort the proportions of victory and defeat a bit. This is quite common among partisan historians everywhere, and a modern historian knows how to take such minor distortions into account. The unanimous and entirely coherent testimony that the wars in Hindustan were

religious wars of Muslims against Kafirs is a different matter altogether: denying this testimony is not a matter of small adjustments, but of replacing the well-attested historical facts with their diametrical opposite.

Habib tried to absolve the ideology (Islam) of the undeniable facts of persecution and massacre of the Pagans by blaming individuals (the Muslims). The sources however point to the opposite state of affairs: Muslim fanatics were merely faithful executors of Quranic injunctions. Not the Muslims are guilty, but Islam.

2.4 NEGATIONISM RAMPANT: THE MARXISTS

The Aligarh school has been emulated on a large scale. Soon its torch was taken over by Marxist historians, who were building a reputation for unscrupled history-rewriting in accordance with the party-line.

In this context, one should know that there is a strange alliance between the Indian Communist parties and the Muslim fanatics. In the forties the Communists gave intellectual muscle and political support to the Muslim League's plan to partition India and create an Islamic state. After independence, they successfully combined (with the tacit support of Prime minister Nehru) to sabotage the implementation of the constitutional provision that Hindi be adopted as national language, and to force India into the Soviet-Arab front against Israel. Ever since, this collaboration has continued to their mutual advantage as exemplified by their common front to defend the Babri Masjid, that symbol of Islamic fanaticism. Under Nehru's rule these Marxists acquired control of most of the educational and research institutes and policies.

Moreover, they had an enormous mental impact on the Congress apparatus: even those who formally rejected the Soviet system, thought completely in Marxist categories. They accepted, for instance, that religious conflicts can be reduced to economic and class contradictions. They also adopted Marxist terminology, so that they always refer to conscious Hindus as the communal forces or elements (Marxism dehumanizes people to impersonal pawns, or forces, in the hands of god History). The Marxist historians had the field all to themselves, and they set to work to decommunalize Indian history-writing, i.e. to erase the importance of Islam as a factor of conflict.

In *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*, Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, professors at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU, the Mecca of secularism and negationism) in Delhi, write that the interpretation of medieval wars as religious conflicts is in fact a back-projection of contemporary religious conflict artificially created for political purposes. In Bipan Chandra's famous formula, communalism is not a dinosaur, it is a strictly modern phenomenon. They explicitly deny that before the modern period there existed such a thing as Hindu identity or Muslim identity. Conflicts could not have been between Hindus and Muslims, only between rulers or classes who incidentally also belonged to

one religious community or the other. They point to the conflicts within the communities and to alliances across community boundaries.

It is of course a fact that some Hindus collaborated with the Muslim rulers, but that also counted for the British colonial rulers, who are for that no less considered as foreign oppressors. For that matter, in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw the Nazis employed Jewish guards, in their search for absconding Jews they employed Jewish informers, and in their policy of deportation they even sought the co-operation of the Zionist movement: none of this can disprove Nazi- Jewish enmity. It is also a fact that the Muslim rulers sometimes made war among each other, but that was equally true for Portuguese, French and British colonizers, who fought some wars on Indian territory: they were just as much part of a single colonial movement with a common colonial ideology, and all the brands of colonialism were equally the enemies of the Indian freedom movement. Even in the history of the Crusades, that paradigm of religious war, we hear a lot of battles between one Christian-Muslim coalition and another: these do not falsify the over-all characterization of the Crusades as a war between Christians and Muslims (triggered by the destruction of Christian churches by Muslims).

After postulating that conflicts between Hindus and Muslims as such were non-existent before the modern period, the negationists are faced with the need to explain how this type of conflict was born after centuries of a misunderstood non-existence. The Marxist explanation is a conspiracy theory: the separate communal identity of Hindus and Muslims is an invention of the sly British colonialists. They carried on a divide and rule policy, and therefore they incited the communal separateness. As the example par excellence, prof. R.S. Sharma mentions the 19th -century 8-volume work by Elliott and Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its own Historians*. This work does indeed paint a very grim picture of Muslim hordes who attack the Pagans with merciless cruelty. But this picture was not a concoction by the British historians: as the title of their work says, they had it all from indigenous historiographers, most of them Muslims.

Yet, the negationist belief that the British newly created the Hindu-Muslim divide has become an article of faith with everyone in India who calls himself a secularist. It became a central part of the negationist argument in the debate over the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid issue. Time and again, the negationist historians (including Bipan Chandra, K.N. Panikkar, S.

Gopal, Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia, Irfan Habib, R.S. Sharma, Gyanendra Pandey, Sushil Srivastava, Asghar Ali Engineer, as well as the Islamic politician Syed Shahabuddin) have asserted that the tradition according to which the Babri mosque forcibly replaced a Hindu temple, is nothing but a myth purposely created in the 19th century. To explain the popularity of the myth even among local Muslim writers in the 19th century, most of them say it was a deliberate British concoction, spread in the interest of the divide and rule- policy. They affirm this conspiracy scenario without anyhow citing, from the copious archives which the British administration in India has left behind, any kind of positive indication for their convenient hypothesis - let alone the rigorous proof on which a serious historian would base his assertions, especially in such controversial questions.

They have kept on taking this stand even after five documents by local Muslims outside the British sphere in the 19th century, two documents by Muslim officials from the early 18th century, and two documents by European travellers from the 18th and 17th century, as well as the extant revenue records, all confirming the temple destruction scenario, were brought to the public's notice in 1990. In their pamphlets and books, the negationists simply kept on ignoring most or all of this evidence, defiantly disregarding historical fact as well as academic deontology.

Concerning the Ayodhya debate, it is worth recalling that the negationists have also resorted to another tactic so familiar to our European negationists, and to all defenders of untenable positions: personal attacks on their opponents, in order to pull the public's attention away from the available evidence. In December 1990, the leading JNU historians and several allied scholars, followed by the herd of secularist penpushers in the Indian press, have tried to raise suspicions against the professional honesty of Prof. B.B. Lal and Dr. S.P. Gupta, the archaeologists who have unearthed evidence for the existence of a Hindu temple at the Babri Masjid site. Rebuttals by these two and a number of other archaeologists have received coverage in the secularist press.

In February 1991, Irfan Habib gave his infamous speech to the Aligarh Muslim University historians, in which he made personal attacks on the scholars who took part in the government-sponsored debate on Ayodhya in defence of the Hindu claim, and on Prof. B.B. Lal. In this case, the weekly

Sunday did publish a lengthy reply by the deputy superintending archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India, A.K. Sinha. The contents of this reply are very relevant, but it is a bit technical (i.e. not adapted to the medium of a weekly for the general public) and written in clumsy English, which gives a poor over-all impression.

Actually, I speculate that the Sunday-editor may well have selected it for publication precisely because of these flaws. The practice is well-known in the treatment of letters to the editor: those defending the wrong viewpoint only get published if they are somewhat funny or otherwise harmless. I cannot be sure about this particular case, but it is a general fact that from their power positions, the negationists use every means at their disposal to create a negative image for the Hindu opponents of Islamic imperialism, including the selective highlighting of the most clumsy and least convincing formulations of the Hindu viewpoint.

In his Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy, the Islamic apologist Ali Asghar Engineer has also selected a few incomplete and less convincing statements of the Hindu position, in order to create a semblance of willingness to hear the Hindu viewpoint while at the same time denying the Hindu side any publicity for its strongest arguments. He has kept the most decisive pieces of evidence entirely out of the readers' view, but has covered this deliberate distortion of the picture behind a semblance of even-handedness. In *Anatomy of a Confrontation*, the JNU historians do not even mention the powerful argumentation by Prof. A.R. Khan, while Prof. Harsh Narain and Mr. A.K. Chatterjee's presentation authentic testimonies (in *Indian Express*, republished by *Voice of India* in *Hindu Temples, What happened to Them* and in *History vs. Casuistry*) are only mentioned but not detailed and discussed, let alone refuted; but clumsy RSS pamphlets and improvised statements by BJP orators are quoted and analyzed at length.

The concluding paragraph of A.K.Sinha's rebuttal to Irfan Habib's speech points out the contradiction between the earlier work of even Marxist historians about ancient India (in which they treat the epics as sources of history, not mere fable) and their recent Babri-politicized stand: "Today, even taking the name of Mahabharata and Ramayana is considered as anti-national and communal by the communist leaders, Babri Masjid Action Committee historians and the pseudo-secularists. What do they propose to do with all that has been published so far in [this] context by the Marxists

themselves, notably D.D. Kosambi, R.S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, K.M. Shrimali, D.N. Jha and others? I have been thinking about the behaviour of our Marxist friends and historians, their unprovoked slander campaign against many colleagues, hurling abuses and convicting anyone and everyone even before the charges could be framed and proved. Their latest target is [so] sober and highly respected a person as prof. B.B. Lal, who has all his life (now he is nearing 70) never involved himself in petty politics or in the groupism [which is] so favourite a sport among the so-called Marxist intellectuals of this country. But then [slander] is a well-practised art among the Marxists."

Another trick which a student of Holocaust negationism will readily recognize in the pro-Babri campaign of the Indian negationists, is that truly daring form of amnipulation: selectively quoting an authority to make him say the opposite of his own considered opinion. When the JNU historians started slandering Prof. B.B. Lal as a turncoat hired by the VHP, this was a panic reaction after their earlier tactic had been exposed (though only in Indian Express, but the negationist front will not tolerate even one hole in the cordon of information control). Until then, they had been using B.B. Lal's fame to suport their own position that the Babri Masjid had not replaced a temple.

In their pamphlet *The Political Abuse of History*, the JNU historians had quoted from a brief summary, published by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1980, of Prof. B.B. Lal's report on his excavations in Ayodhya and other Ramayana sites. They knew this report perfectly well, for they had gleefully quoted its finding that the excavations just near the Babri Masjid had not yielded any remains pre-dating the 9th century BC. But then they had gone on to state that there was no archeological indication for a pre-Masjid temple on that controversial site at all, even when the same report had cursorily mentioned the remains of a building dated to the 11th century AD. Later on, they have quoted the same summary as saying that the later period was devoid of any interest, suggesting that nothing of any importance dating from the medieval period had been found.

In fact, this remark only proves that the ASI summarizer saw no reason to give (or saw reasons not to give) details about the uninteresting but nonetheless existing medieval findings. But in autumn 1990, some of these details have been made public and they turned out to be of decisive

importance in the Ram Janmabhoomi debate. Prof.K.N. Panikkar (in Anatomy of a Confrontation) suggests that, if these relevant details were not recently thought up to suit the theories of the RSS, they must have been deliberately concealed at that time (late seventies) by the ASI summarizer. The latter possibility means that negationists are active in the ASI publishing section, editing archaeological reports to suit the negationist campaign. The implied allegation is so serious that K.N. Panikkar expects the reader to assume the other alternative, viz. an RSS concoction. But he may well have hit the nail on its head with his suggestion that negationists in the ASI are doing exactly the same thing that they are doing in all Indian institutions and media: misusing their positions to distort information.

At any rate, the details of the full report were given in articles by Dr. S.P. Gupta and by Prof. B.B. Lal himself (and independently by other archaeologists in talks and letters to Indian Express) in late 1990. The pillar-bases of an 11th century building, aligned to the Babri Masjid walls, were presented by Prof. B.B. Lal and Dr. S.P.Gupta in separate filmed interviews with the BBC. There could be no doubt about it anymore: Prof. B.B. Lal had arrived at a conclusion opposite to the one ascribed to him by a number of Marxist historians (not only from JNU).

That is why in early December 1990 several of the most vocal Marxist historians suddenly took to slander and accused Prof. B.B. Lal of having changed his opinion in order to suit the VHP's political needs. Now that they could no longer use Prof. Lal's reputation for their own ends, they decided to try and destroy it. In the case of Dr. S.P. Gupta, they have not taken back their ridiculous allegation that he had falsely claimed participation in the Ramayana sites excavations. But with a big name like B.B. Lal, an impeccable academic of world fame, they had to be careful, because slander against him might somehow backfire. That is why they have not pressed the point, and why a number of Marxist historians and other participants in the Ayodhya debate have quietly reverted to the earlier tactic of selectively quoting from the ASI summary of Prof. B.B. Lal's report, and acting as if the great archaeologist has supported and even proven their own position. As the press had given minimum coverage to B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta's revelations, many people would not suspect the truth.

Another trick from the negationists' book that has been very much in evidence during the Ayodhya debate, consists in focusing all attention on the pieces of evidence given by those who upheld the historical truth, and trying to find fault with them as valid evidence. Thus, at the press conference (19 Dec. 1992) where Dr. S.P. Gupta and other historians presented photographs of an inscription found during the demolition of the Babri Masjid, which proved once more that a temple had stood on the site, and that it was specifically a birthplace temple for "Vishnu Hari who defeated Bali and the ten-headed king [Ravana]", some journalists heckled the speakers with remarks that "because of the demolition, the inscription was not in situ and therefore not valid as evidence", and similar feats of petty fault-finding.

A few days later, a group of 70 archaeologists and historians, mostly names who had not taken a prominent role in this debate so far, brought shame on themselves by pronouncing judgement on this piece of evidence without even seeing, let alone studying it. They demanded not that the government look into this new evidence, as would be proper for representatives of the scientific spirit, but that it trace down from which museum the planted evidence had been stolen and brought to Ayodhya. In doing history falsification, it is best to remain on the attack, and to put the bonafide historians on the defensive by accusing them first.

After dozens of pieces of evidence for the forcible replacement of temple with mosque scenario had been given, the Babri negationists had never come up with a single piece of counter-evidence (i.e. positive evidence for an alternative scenario); they could not do better than keep silent over the most striking evidence, and otherwise scream at the top of their voice that evidence A did not count, evidence B was not valid, evidence C was flawed, evidence D was fabricated. In 1992 alone, in the clearing operations near the Janmabhoomi site in June, during several visits of experts, and during the demolition on 6 December, more than 200 pieces of archaeological evidence for the pre-existent Vaishnava temple had been found, but these 70 scholars preferred to disregard all them. This time, the suggestion was that in the middle of the kar seva, the inscription had been planted there. You could just as well join the Holocaust negationists and say that the gas chambers found in 1945 had been a Hollywood mise-en-scene. Picking at a single testimony as if the whole case depends on it has been a

favourite technique of the negationists to distract attention from the larger picture, to make people forget that even if this one piece of evidence were flawed, this would not invalidate the general conclusions built on a whole corpus of evidence.

A final point of similarity between the Marxist involvement in the Babri Masjid case and the techniques of Holocaust negationism is the fact that there was a Babri Masjid debate in the first place. Indeed, postulating doubt and the need for a debate is the first step of denial. The tradition that the Babri Masjid had forcibly replaced a temple was firmly established and supported by sources otherwise accepted as authoritative; when it was challenged, this was not on the basis of newfound material which justified a re-examination of the historical position. The correct procedure would have been that the deniers of the established view come up with some positive evidence for their innovative position: until then, there was simply no reason for a debate. Instead, they started demanding that the other side give proof of what had been known all along, and forced a debate on something that was really a matter of consensus. Subsequently, instead of entering the ring, attacking or countering their opponents' case with positive evidence of their own, the challengers set themselves up as judges of the other side's argumentation. This is indeed reminiscent of the negationist Institute for Historical Review announcing a prize for whomever could prove that the Holocaust had taken place.

There is yet another trick from the negationist arsenal which has been tried in India: find a witness from the victims' camp to testify to the aggressor's innocence. Of course there are not witnesses around who lived through Aurangzeb's terror, but there are many who lived through the horrors of Partition. It is nobody's case that the killings which Jinnah considered a fair price for his Muslim state, never took place. But the negationists have spent a lot of effort on proving the next best thing: that the guilt was spread evenly among Hindus and Muslims.

The Communist novelist Bhishma Sahni has used the novel *Tamas* to point the Hindus as the villains in the Partition violence. The interesting thing is that Bhishma Sahni's own family was among the Hindu refugees hounded out of Pakistan. His anti-Hindu bias, coming from a man who would have more reason for an anti-Muslim animus, is a gift from heaven for the Hindu-baiters. Marxist Professor Bipan Chandra parades a similar character

in his paper: Communalism - the Way Out (published together with two lectures by KJhushwant Singh as: Many Faces of Communalism). One of his students had survived the terror of Partition in Rawalpindi, losing 7 family members. But he did not have any animus against the Muslims, for he said: "Very early I realized that my parents had not been killed by the Muslims, they had been killed by communalism." Coming from a victim of Muslim violence, this is excellent material for those who want to apportion equal blame to Hindus and Muslims.

Of course, Bipan Chandra's student was right. The cause of Partition and of its accompanying violence was not the Muslims, but communalism, i.e. the belief that people with a common religion form a separate social and political entity. This belief is not fostered by Hinduism, but it is central to Islam ever since Mohammed founded his first Islamic state in Medina. It is true that some Hindu groups (most conspicuously the Sikhs) have recently adopted some Islamic elements, including the communalist belief that a religious group forms a separate nation entitled to a separate state. But the source of this communalist poison in India is and remains Islam. Therefore, Bipan Chandra's student has in fact said: "My family was not killed by the Muslims, but by Islam."

It is a different matter that Muslims are the most likely carriers of the Islamic disease called communalism, and that they had massively voted for the communalist project of creating a separate Muslim state. The culprit was Islam, and concerning the positions of the Muslims in the light of the fanatical nature of Islam, I would quote Bipan Chandra's own simile for understanding the difference between communalism and its adherents: when a patient suffers from a terrible disease, you don't kill him, but cure him. The victims of Islamic indoctrination should not be the target of Hindu revenge, as they were in large numbers in 1947. Don't kill the patient, kill the disease. Remove Islam from the Muslims' minds through education and India's communal problem will be as good as solved.

At this point we may take a second look at the Marxist position, mentioned above, that the Hindu community is a recent invention. The observations which I just made concerning the Islamic provenance of communalism might seem to confirm that there was no Hindu communal identity. However, the authentic sources from the medieval period are unanimous about the sharp realization of a separate communal identity as

Muslims and as Hindus, overwhelmingly on the Muslim side, but also on the Hindu side. We know for instance that Shivaji, who turned the tide of the Muslim offensive in the late 17th century, was a conscious partisan of an all-Hindu liberation war against Muslim rule (Hindu Pad Padashahi). The same counts for Rana Pratap and many other Hindu leaders, and there cannot be any doubt that the Vijayanagar empire was conscious of its role as the last fortress of Hindu civilization.

It is true that some Hindu kings attacked neighbouring Hindu states in the back when these were attacked by the Muslim invaders. They were at first not aware that these Islamic newcomers were a common enemy, motivated by hatred against all non-Muslims; but their lack of insight into the character of Islam in no way disproves their awareness of a common Hindu identity. The fact that they were acutely aware of their internal political rivalries, does not exclude that they were aware of a more fundamental common identity, which was not at stake in these internecine feuds, but which they defended together once they realized that it was the target of this new kind of ideologically motivated aggressor, Islam. Brothers are aware that they have a lot in common, and this is not disproven by the fact that, when left to themselves, they also quarrel with each other.

If at all some Hindus had at first only been conscious of their own caste or sect rather than of the Hindu commonwealth, the Muslim persecutions of all Hindus without distinction certainly made them aware of their common identity and interest. So, if the Marxists perforce want to deny the common culture and value system underlying the diversity of the Hindu commonwealth, then let them apply some of their own dialectics instead. "It is in their common struggle against the Islamic aggressors, that the disparate sections of the native Indian society have forged their common identity as Hindus": I do not agree with this statement which posits a negative and reactive basis for a common Hindu identity, but it must be accepted if one labours under the assumption that there never had been a positive common identity before. It is unreasonable to expect the Indian Pagans to be lumped together as Hindus for centuries on end, to be uniformly made the target of one neverending aggression by Islam, to be subjected to the same humiliations and the same jizya tax, and yet not become conscious of a common interest. This common interest would then give rise to unifying cultural superstructure. That is how the sustained and uniform Islamic

attack on all India Pagans would inevitably have given rise to at least a measure of common Hindu identity if this had not previously existed.

In his *Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya* (1990), the Marxist Professor R.S. Sharma argues that the medieval Hindus did not see the Muslims as a distinct religious entity, but as an ethnic group, the Turks. His proof: the Gahadvala dynasty levied a tax called *Turushkadanda*, tax financing the war effort against the Turks. But this does not prove what Sharma thinks it proves.

The Muslims called the Pagans of India sometimes *Kafirs*, unbelievers, i.e. a religious designation; but often they called them *Hindus* inhabitants of *Hindustan*, i.e. an ethnic-geographical designation (from *Hind*, the Persian equivalent of *Sindh*). And they gave religious contents to this geographical term, which it has kept till today: so it is correct that the Hindus never defined themselves as *Hindus*, as this was the Persian and later the Muslim term for the Indian Pagans adhering to *Sanatana Dharma*. But that was only a terminological matter, the fundamental religious unity of the *Sanatana Dharmis* was just as much a fact. Similarly, the Hindus called these newcomers *Turks*, but this does not exclude recognition of their religious specificity. On the contrary, even *Teimur the Terrible*, who made it absolutely clear in his memoirs that he came to India to wage a religious war against the Pagans, and who freed the Muslim captives from a conquered city before putting the Hindu remainder to the sword, referred to his own forces as the *Turks*. Conversely, the Hindus describe as the typical Turkish behaviour pattern that which is enjoined by Islam.

While it is true that the Hindus have been much too slow (till today) in studying the religious foundation of the barbaric behaviour which they experienced at the hands of the *Turushkas*, at least they soon found out that for these invaders religion was the professed motive of their inhuman behaviour. Prof. Sharma's piece of evidence, the institution of a *Turushkandana*, does however prove very clearly that the Islamic threat was extraordinary: the normal armed forces and war credits were not sufficient to deal with this threat which was in a class by itself.

The original source material leaves us in no doubt that conflicts often erupted on purely religious grounds, even against the political and economical interests of the contending parties. The negationists' tactic

therefore consists in keeping this original testimony out of view. A good example is Prof. Gyanendra Pandey's recent book, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. As the title clearly says, Pandey asserts that communalism (the Hindu-Muslim conflict) had been constructed by the British for colonial purposes and out of colonial prejudices, was later interiorized by Indians looking for new, politically profitable forms of organization in modern colonial society. This is like saying that anti-Judaism is a construction of modern capitalists to divide the working class (the standard Marxist explanation for all kinds of racism), while concealing the copious medieval testimony of anti-Judaism on undeniably non-capitalist grounds. Prof. Pandey effectively denies a millenniumful of testimonies to Islamic persecution of the Indian (Hindu) Kafirs.

Another example is prof. K.N. Panikkar's work on the Moplah rebellion,, a pogrom against the Hindus by the Malabar (Kerala) Muslims in the margin of the khilafat movement in 1921 (official death toll 2,339). Panikkar takes the orthodox Marxist position that this was not a communal but a class conflict, not between Hindus and Muslims but between workers who happened to be Muslims and landlords who happened to be Hindus. In reality the communal character of the massacre was so evident that even Mahatma Gandhi recognized it as terrible blow for his ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is quite possible that the occasion was used to settle scores with landlords and money-lenders (that stereotype of anti-Hindu as well as of anti-Jewish sloganeering), but the mullahs exhorted their flock to attack all Hindus, and added in so many words that not only the landlords but all the Hindus were their enemies. The poison of Islamic fanaticism is such that it turns any kind of conflict into an attack on the non-Muslims.

More Marxist wisdom we encounter in Romila Thapar's theory (in her contribution to S. Gopal's book on the Ayodhya affair, *Anatomy of a Confrontation*) that the current Hindu movement wants to unite all Hindus, not because the Hindus feel besieged by hostile forces, not because they have a memory of centuries of jihad, but because "a monolithic religion is more compatible with capitalism" (to borrow the formulation of a reviewer). She thinks that the political Hindu movement is merely a concoction by Hindu capitalists, or in her own words "part of the attempt to redefine Hinduism as an ideology for modernization by the middle class",

in which "modernization is seen as linked to the growth of capitalism". She reads the mind behind the capitalist conspiracy to reform Hinduism thus: "Capitalism is often believed to thrive among Semitic religions such as Christianity and Islam. The argument would then run that if capitalism is to succeed in India, then Hinduism would also have to be moulded in a Semitic form".

It is always interesting to see how Communists presuppose the superiority of Hinduism by denouncing Hindu militancy as the semiticization or islamization of Hinduism. But the point is that the political mobilization of Hindu society under the increasing pressure of hostile forces is explained away as merely a camouflage of economic forces. One smiles about such simplistic subjection of unwilling facts of Marxist dogma. Especially because such analyses were still being made in 1991, and are still being made today: in India it has not yet dawned on the dominant intelligentsia that Marxism has failed not only as a political and economical system, but also as a sociological model of explanation. On the contrary, Indian Marxists even manage to make foreign correspondents for non-Marxist media swallow their analysis, e.g. after the Babri Masjid demolition, even the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung explained Hindu fundamentalism in the same socio-economical terms, complete with urban traders who are looking for an identity etc.

Incidentally, Romila Thapar is right in observing that certain Hindu revivalists are trying to "find parallels with the Semitic religions as if these parallels are necessary for the future of Hinduism" (though her attempt to force the Ram Janmabhoomi movement into this mould, with Rama being turned into a prophet and the Ramayana into the sole revealed Scripture etc., is completely unfounded and another pathetic case of trying to force unwilling facts into a pre-conceived scheme). She sounds like favouring a renewed emphasis on "the fact that the religious experience of Indian civilization and of religious sects which are bunched together under the label of Hindu are distinctively different from that of the Semitic".

It is true that some Hindu revivalist movements have tried to redefine Hinduism in terms borrowed from monotheism, with rudiments of notions like an infallible Scripture (back to the Vedas: the Arya Samaj), iconoclastic monotheism (Arya Samaj, Akali neo-Sikhs), or a monolithic hierarchic organization (the RSS). But the reason for this development cannot with

any stretch of the imagination be deduced from the exigencies of capitalism. An honest analysis of this tendency in Hinduism to imitate the Christian-Islamic model will demonstrate that a psychology of tactical imitation as a way of self-defence against these aggressive Semitic religions was at work. The tendency cannot possibly be reduced to the socio- economical categories dear to Marxism, but springs from the terror which Islam (not feudalism or capitalism, but Islam) had struck in the Hindu mind, and which was subsequently fortified with an intellectual dimension by the Christian missionary propaganda against primitive polytheism. Those Hindus who were waging the struggle for survival against the Islamic and Christian onslaught have come to resemble their enemies a bit, and have interiorized a lot of the aggressors' contempt for typical Hindu things, such as idol-worship, doctrinal pluralism, social decentralization. It is for Hindu society to reflect on whether this imitation was the right course, and whether it has not been self- defeating in some respects.

At any rate, the very existence of this psychological need among some militant Hindus to imitate the prophetic- monotheistic religions is a symptom of an already old polarization between Hinduism and aggressive monotheism, especially Islam. Bipan Chandra's chronology of communalism as a 20th century phenomenon cannot explain the communal polarization of which Sikhism and the Arya Samaj were manifestations. These can only be understood from the centuries of active hostility between Islam and Hinduism. Shivaji was not a herald of capitalism, nor a product of British divide and rule policy, but a participant in an ongoing war between Hindu civilization and Islamic aggression.

Since the 1950s the history market is being flooded with publications conveying the negationist version to a greater or lesser extent. The public is fed negationist TV serials like *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, an exercise in whitewashing the arch-fanatic last Muslim ruler. Most general readers and many serious students only get to know about Indian history through negationist glasses. In India, the negationists have managed what European negationists can only dream of: turn the tables on honest historians and marginalize them. People who have specialized in adapting history to the party-line, are lecturing others about the political abuse of history. By contrast, genuine historians who have refused to tamper with the record of Islam (like Jadunath Sarkar, R.C. Majumdar, K.S. Lal) are held out as

examples of communalist historywriting in textbooks which are required reading in all history departments in India.

But the negationists are not satisfied with seeing their own version of the facts being repeated in more and more books and papers. They also want to prevent other versions from reaching the public. Therefore, in 1982 the National Council of Educational Research and Training issued a directive for the rewriting of schoolbooks. Among other things, it stipulated that: "Characterization of the medieval period as a time of conflict between Hindus and Muslims is forbidden." Under Marxist pressure, negationism has become India's official policy.

Now that Marxism is no longer the fashion of the day, it is very easy to expose the shameless dishonesty of many vocal Marxist intellectuals. It is time to go through the record and see what they have said about the "economic successes" of the Soviet Union, the enthusiasm of the Chinese people for the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, about the Communist involvement in crimes like Katyn, and about the lies put out by the CIA-sponsored dissidents and camp survivors. Their Islam negationism is by far not their first systematic falsification of a chapter of history.

When the Marxists start lecturing Hindus about tolerance and the respect for Barbar's mosque, it is easy to put them on the defensive by asking what happened to churches, mosques and temples when Mao took over. Communist regimes' treatment of religion has been similar to Islam's treatment of infidelity. Either religious people had the zimmi status, i.e. they were suffered to exist but at the cost of career prospects, benefit of social or material benefits, always under the watchful eye of police informers, and of course without the right to convert or to object to state atheism's conversion efforts (according to the chinese Constitution, there is a right to practise religion and a right to practise and propagete atheism); or they were simply persecuted, their religious education forbidden (in the Soviet Union, many people have spent years in jail for transporting Bibles or teaching Hebrew), their places of worship demolished or expropriated for secular use. Communism and Islam are truly comrades in intolerance.

Certainly some statements can be dug up of Indian Communists defending the Cultural Revolution in which so many thousands of places of worship

were destroyed and their personnel brutalized or killed. When the Khumar Rouge were in power, less than 1,000 of the 65,000 Buddhist monks managed to survive : what did the Indian Marxists (card- carrying and other) say then? The bigger part of the Marxists' success was in their aggressiveness: as long as they remained on the offensive, everyone tried to live up to the norms they prescribed. Now it is time to put them to scrutiny.

2.5 FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR INDIAN NEGATIONISM

Some foreign authors, influenced by Indian colleagues, have also added a big dose of negationism to their work on Indian history. For instance, Percival Spear, co-author (with Romila Thapar) of the Penguin History of India, writes: "Aurangzeb's supposed intolerance is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on a temple site in Benares."

This is a repetition of the thesis defended by Zahiruddin Faruki in his "Aurangzeb and his times" (1935), recently taken up again by S.N.M. Abdi in Illustrated Weekly of India (5/12/1992), who claims that Aurangzeb was not anti-Hindu, and that the Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri (made available to the public by the Royal Society of Bengal and translated by Jadunath Sarkar), which lists Aurangzeb's temple-destroying activities from day to day, is a forgery. Faruki and Abdi count on the public's limited zeal for checking the sources, when they falsely claim that "apart from the Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri, there is no other reference to the order for the destruction of temples", and that we do not hear of any protest which large-scale temple destruction would have caused.

Abdi thinks he can get away with claiming as evidence a stone slab allegedly seen by Faruki in the Gyanvapi mosque in Benares, mentioning a date (1659) that does not tally with the traditional date (1669) of the forcible replacement of the Kashi Vishvanath temple with this mosque; even while admitting that "the slab seen by Faruki has disappeared mysteriously, along with another significant piece of evidence". Without blinking, he then cites a theory that the Gyanvapi mosque already existed under Akbar, i.e. a century before either of the two dates. Further, he quotes as authority a local agitator who claims: "My research reveals that a Buddhist vihara was demolished to make way for a temple, which was subsequently pulled down and the Gyanvapi mosque constructed on its site." The first claim, in spite of flaunting the pretentious term research, is a plain lie; the second is of course true but contradicts the case which Mr. Abdi is building up. Such is the quality of the argument for Aurangzeb's tolerance and Hindu-friendliness.

What are the facts? In Benares (Varanasi), Aurangzeb (1658-1707) did not just build an isolated mosque on a destroyed temple. He ordered all temples

destroyed, among them the Kashi Vishvanath, one of the most sacred places of Hinduism, and had mosques built on a number of cleared temple sites. All other Hindu sacred places within his reach equally suffered destruction, with mosques built on them; among them, Krishna's birth temple in Mathura, the rebuilt Somnath temple on the coast of Gujrat, the Vishnu temple replaced with the Alamgir mosque now overlooking Benares, the Treta-ka-Thakur temple in Ayodhya. The number of temples destroyed by Aurangzeb is counted in 4, if not in 5 figures. According to the official court chronicle, Aurangzeb "ordered all provincial governors to destroy all schools and temples of the Pagans and to make a complete end to all Pagan teachings and practices". The chronicle sums up the destructions like this: "Hasan Ali Khan came and said that 172 temples in the area had been destroyed... His majesty went to Chittor, and 63 temples were destroyed... Abu Tarab, appointed to destroy the idol-temples of Amber, reported that 66 temples had been razed to the ground".

In quite a number of cases, inscriptions on mosques and local tradition do confirm that Aurangzeb built them in forcible replacement of temples (some of these inscriptions have been quoted in Sitaram Goel: *Hindu Temples*, vol.2, along with a number of independent written accounts). Aurangzeb's reign was marked by never-ending unrest and rebellions, caused by his anti-Hindu policies, which included the reimposition of the jizya and other zimma rules, and indeed the demolition of temples.

Aurangzeb did not stop at razing temples: their users too were levelled. There were not just the classical massacres of thousands of resisters, Brahmins, Sikhs. What gives a more pointed proof of Aurangzeb's fanaticism, is the execution of specific individuals for specific reason of intolerance. To name the best-known ones: Aurangzeb's brother Dara Shikoh was executed because of apostasy (i.e. taking an interest in Hindu philosophy), and the Sikh guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded because of his objecting to Aurangzeb's policy of forcible conversions in general, and in particular for refusing to become a Muslim himself. Short, Percival Spear's statement that Aurangzeb's fanaticism is but a hostile legend, is a most serious case of negationism.

An example of a less blatant (i.e. more subtle) form of negationism in Western histories of India, is the India entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Its chapter on the Sultanate period (which was much more

bloody than even the Moghul period) does not mention any persecutions and massacres of Hindus by Muslims, except that Firuz Shah Tughlaq "made largely unsuccessful attempts to convert his Hindu subjects and sometimes persecuted them". The article effectively obeys the negationist directive that "characterization of the medieval period as a time of Hindu- Muslim conflict is forbidden".

It also contains blissful nonsense about communal amity in places where the original sources only mention enmity. Thus, it says that Bahmani sultan Tajuddin Firuz extracted tribute payments and the hand of the king's daughter from the Hindu bastion Vijayanagar after two military campaigns, and that this resulted in "the establishment of an apparently amicable relationship between the two rulers". Jawaharlal Nehru considered the induction of Hindu women in Muslim harems as the cradle of composite culture (his euphemism for Hindu humiliation), but it is worse if even the venerable Encyclopedia considers the terms of debate as a sign of friendship. At any rate, the article goes on to observe naively that peace lasted only for ten years, when Vijaynagar forces inflicted a crushing defeat on Firuz. In this case, the more circumspect form of negationism is at work: keeping the inconvenient facts out of the readers' view, and manipulating the terminology.

An American historian's book is introduced thus: "In this book [Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India], Sandra Freitag examines one of the central problems of modern Indian history, the Hindu-Muslim conflict, with new and provocative insight. She challenges long-standing interpretations by defining this conflict as a developing social process groups, not simply Hindu or Muslim, in highly specific local contexts bound together in a changing institutional order."

This sophisticated verbiage cannot conceal that the book's approach is merely the standard secularist version propagated by Indian establishment historians since decades. There is nothing new and provocative about a book that claims to explain communalism without touching on its single most important determinant, viz. the doctrine laid down in Islamic scripture, and that blurs the clear-cut process of India's communalization by Islam with the help of scapegoats like colonialism.

It is not entirely clear to what extent such Western authors are conscious accomplices in the intellectual crime of negationism, and to what extent they are just gullible copiers of the version given to them by English-speaking Indians. In the case of a historian invited by Penguin to write a History of India, it is hard to believe that he didn't know better.

Another case of malafide reporting is former Time correspondent Edward Desmond's lengthy review of JNU Professor S. Gopal's *Anatomy of a Confrontation* in the New York Review of Books. I know that Mr. Desmond had gone through the books stating the Hindu case on Ayodhya; he had talked to both Mr. Sitaram Goel and myself (by telephone); he knew about hard evidence for the temple that was forcibly replaced by the Babri Masjid, including Prof. B.B. Lal's filmed presentation of the archaeological evidence. And yet, like Prof. Gopal, he strictly keeps the lid on the Hindu case, does not mention the extensive documentary evidence, and curtly dismisses the archaeological evidence as bogus. Here, the psychology at work is apparently that of status-consciousness: you wouldn't expect a senior correspondent of a big American magazine to prefer the company of marginal pro-Hindu writers to that of prestigious Stalinist professors of India's Harvard, would you?

On the other hand, in the day-to-day reporting on the communal situation in India, there is a lot of bonafide copying of the anti-Hindu views dominant in the Indian English-language press. A typical mixed case of some complicity and some gullibility was the TV documentary about Hindu fundamentalism made by BBC correspondent Brian Barron, and broadcast in the week of the first round of the Lok Sabha elections in May 1991. Brian Barron is an otherwise meritorious journalist, witness his revelations in October 1991 about the massacre of thousands of Buddhist monks in the early years of communist rule in Mongolia. But his programme about the Hindu movement was second-rate and biased. For a start, it contained some factual mistakes (like a map meant to show the trail of Hindu leader L.K. Advani's procession in support of the Ram Janmabhoomi cause, which drew a line unrelated to the actual trail, apart from placing Delhi on the Ganga river), exemplifying the carelessness which Western correspondents can afford when it comes to India reporting.

Barron said that India had already been partitioned because of religion. In fact, India has been partitioned because of Islam, against the will of other

religions, and this seemingly small inaccuracy is an old trick to distribute the guilt of Islam in partitioning India over all religions equally. Barron made no attempt to seem impartial, and introduced BJP leader L.K. Advani as a demagogue. He asked Advani's declared enemy V.P. Singh whether Advani was not merely putting a humane mask on fanaticism. Easy, that way V.P. Singh only had to say yes. He failed to take the opportunity to question V.P. Singh about his political marriage with the Muslim fundamentalist leader Imam Bukhari, while that was a case of a Hindu promoting fundamentalism as well. He let Swami Agnivesh, a Marxist in ochre robe, accuse the BJP of mixing religion and politics, but neglected to inform the viewers that Swami Agnivesh has himself combining monkhood with being a Janata Dal candidate in the Lok Sabha elections.

When Barron asked Advani why he had allowed so much bloodshed on his procession (the rathayatra of October 1990), whereas in fact there had been no riots all along the path of his month-long journey, Advani correctly said: "You are taken in by a disinformation campaign." A serious journalist would have inquired deeper when his sources, with which the quality of his work stands or falls, are questioned so pointedly. When a sadhu said that Muslims refuse to respect Hindus and that Hindus are legally discriminated against, Barron did not inquire what these discriminations were. Like all western reporters, he has reported on Hindu fundamentalism without asking even once why this movement has emerged, instead relaying the Marxist line that it is all a camouflage for class (c.q. caste) interests, an artificial creation for petty political gain.

Barron interviewed prof. Romila Thapar, who accused the Hindu movement of aiming at a system in which some communities would be second-class citizens living in constant fear for their lives. From a spokeswoman of Marxism, which has held entire populations in constant fear and oppression, and which has killed numerous millions of "contrarevolutionary elements" (to use the criminalizing, dehumanizing Marxist term), the allegation sounds rather shameless. But the viewers were not told where Romila Thapar stands, they were led to believe that this was a neutral observer who had been asked for an objective explanation. The same thing has happened a number of times in both Time Magazine and Newsweek: Bipan Chandra, Romila Thapar and their comrades get quoted as if they are

non-partisan authorities. Though anti-Communist in their general reporting, when it comes to India, these papers (unknowingly?) present the Marxists' viewpoint as objective in-depth background information.

Only ten years ago, the Left-oriented media in many Western countries freely attacked the really existing capitalism and also conjured up all kinds of fantastic CIA and neo-fascist conspiracies, but scrupulously shielded the really existing socialism from criticism. Similarly, Brian Barron gave Prof. Thapar the chance to say her thing about unproven sinister plans imputed to the Hindu movement, but scrupulously refrained from pointing out that Miss Thapar's picture of a theocratic society in which minorities are second-class citizens living in mortal fear, is already really existing in the neighbouring Islamic republic of Pakistan and in many Muslim states (and, *mutatis mutandis* in Communist countries).

These days, reporting on the communal situation in India consists in highlighting the splinter in the Hindu eye and concealing the beam in the Muslim eye. At the time of the 1991 Lok Sabha elections, the German left-leaning weekly *Der Spiegel* summarized the communal riots in independent India as follows: "Since 1947, Indian statisticians have counted 11,000 riots with 12,000 Muslim victims." Hindu victims are not even mentioned, as if you were reading a fundamentalist paper like *Muslim India* or *Radiance*.

The Ayodhya conflict offers a good examples of the absurd standards applied by reporters. A Hindu sacred site, back in use as a Hindu temple (since 1949 with, since 1986 without restrictions) after centuries of Muslim occupation, is claimed by Muslim leaders, who also insist on continuing the occupation of two other sacred sites in Mathura and Kashi (and numerous other sites which the Hindu leaders are not even claiming back). Claiming the right to occupy other communities' sacred sites: if this is not fanatical, I don't know what is. Yet, the whole world press is on the side of the Muslims, and decries a Hindu plan to build proper temple architecture on the Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya as fanatical. These are not just double standards, but inverted standards.

The very fact that Muslims in India loudly complain about their situation (e.g. about their low educational level, which is 100% the fault of their own mullahs), proves that they are relatively well-off: as I have had the occasion to observe, Hindu visitors or refugees from Pakistan often do not dare to

speak of the horrible conditions in which they are forced to live under Muslim rule, because they fear for their relatives, and because the constant terror has conditioned them never to raise any objections against the Muslim master race. Inside these Muslim states, the remaining Hindus are even more careful never to displease the Muslim masters. For unthinking journalists, their silence is proof that all is well for the minorities in Muslim states, and so they prefer to listen to the vocal malcontents who air the Muslim grievances in tolerant India. Whoever shouts loudest, will get our correspondents' attention, if only because India reporting is mostly of a very low professional quality.

An example of the slanted impression which the Nehruvian establishment creates about Hindu-Muslim relations, concerns the internationally highlighted martyrdom of the Flemish Jesuit Father Rasschaert, near Ranchi in 1964. Father Rasschaert's sister was a friend of my mother's, so as a child I have often heard the details of the story. The part which everybody knows, is that Muslims had fled into a mosque, where Hindus wanted to pursue them, when Father Rasschaert intervened to pacify the crowd, but was killed by the Hindus who subsequently massacred the Muslims.

But the start of the story, never highlighted and sometimes not even mentioned in the contemporary newspaper reports (much less in later references), was that the Hindus in the area had been angered by the sight of mutilated Hindus who had been brought by train from East Pakistan, where they had at least survived the massacres which many more had not. As always, Hindu violence was a retaliation against Muslim violence. No missionary has stepped in to defend the Hindus of Pakistan, in fact no missionary was around, as missions have a very hard time in Pakistan. The missions in Islamic countries find their converts harassed and even killed by their own families, their schools and churches attacked on all kinds of pretexts, their graduates not given jobs. So, the missionary centres prefer to direct their energies to more hospitable countries like India. The fact that a missionary was killed by a Hindu while defending the Muslims, and not the other way round, proves in the first place that Catholic priests can function in India, much more than in Pakistan. A closer scrutiny of this one incidence of Hindu fanaticism reveals a background of much more systematic and institutionalized Muslim fanaticism.

There is a third aspect to the story, which is never mentioned at all. It is that the Hindus in Ranchi were desperate about their government's unwillingness to defend the Hindus in Pakistan. One of the chief culprits behind the massacre was Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the patron of secularism, who used Father Rasschaert's death as yet another occasion to parade his concern for the minorities in India, and to put Hindus in the dock. He himself (and the entire secularist establishment till today) reneged on his duty to defend the Hindus surviving in the Islamic state which he had helped to create. By effectively condoning the persecution of Hindus in Pakistan, he was also responsible for the retaliatory Hindu violence. But the international press has never thought the matter through, and confined its reporting on Father Rasschaert's death to condemning the Hindu fanatics, weeping for the Muslim victims, and praising Nehru as the voice of sanity amid the religious madness.

The way our journalists are led by the nose towards reporting Muslim grievances and ignoring grievances of Hindu minorities (and ridiculing the very real grievances of even the Hindu majority in India), is reminiscent of the sneaking bias in all non-rightist media in Western Europe about the Left-right conflict before the Gorbachov era. They all complied with Marxist-imposed terminology like dictator Pinochet but president Ceaucescu, or rightist rebels but leftist resistance. Criticism of the West was available in plenty, and given wide coverage, but the muted populations of the Soviet bloc were not heard, and little effort was made to go in and hear them. Those who supported the cause of freedom in the Soviet bloc were ridiculed. Worse, when in 1968 the Russian physicist Sakharov had a report about massive human rights violations in the USSR published, leading intellectuals actually denied the existence of "that so-called Russian physicist invented by the reactionary forces to slander the glorious achievements of socialism in the USSR". Yes, so noxious was the intellectual atmosphere in the heyday of Marxism. In those days it was "better to be wrong with [communist] Sartre than to be right with [anti-communist] Aron".

When glasnost made clear just how strong the Soviet bloc populations' disgust with communalism really was, Western intellectuals and socialist parties seemed sincerely surprised. They themselves had so often pleaded that life in the Soviet system was not really worse than in the "so-called

free" West. The press had never given us an adequate picture, not by telling outright lies, but by ignoring the muted voices which the communist dictators wanted us to ignore. At any rate, if there used to be far more demonstrations in the streets of the West than in the Soviet bloc, did it prove that there was less discontent in the latter? We now know better: there was more protest in the West than in the Soviet bloc because there was more freedom and less fear in the West, and in spite of deeper discontent in the Soviet bloc. There is no excuse for making the same mistake in our reporting on the situation of the minorities in India and in Muslim countries.

Without really noticing, the Western press has become the mouth-piece of the Marxist-Muslim alliance which dictates political parlance in India. I assume only a few frontline journalists are conscious participants in the ongoing disinformation campaign. Brian Barron, for one, has demonstrated to what extent he has interiorized the anti-Hindu bias of his Indian spokespersons, with a very little but truly unpardonable piece of disinformation. Reporting on the million-strong demonstration for the Ram Janmabhoomi temple (Delhi, 4 April 1991), he showed a monk carrying a saffron-coloured flag with a white swastika. And for the less perceptive viewers, he added in so many words that the Hindu movement carried the swastika. Of course he knew these two things: (1) most Western viewers know the swastika only as the symbol of Nazism; (2) most Indians know the swastika only as their own age-old symbol of good fortune (swasti = well-being). He must have known perfectly well that he was making the Western viewers read a message which the Hindu demonstrators never sent, viz. that the Hindu movement links up with Nazism. Regardless of the moral quality of such distortive reporting, it goes to show to what extent the negationist faction in the Indian media has managed to picture the Hindus as the bad guys in the eyes of the world.

A few more examples of how Western India-watchers swallow Indian secularist disinformation. The pro-Ram Janmabhoomi demonstration in Delhi on 4 April 1991 was not reported in 99% of the Western papers and electronic news channels. I have inquired among journalists about what they had received on their telexes concerning the largest-ever demonstration in the biggest democracy in the world. It turned out that these had mentioned 3 lakh demonstrators (when even the government-controlled

police had given the estimate of 8 lakh), and not made the object of the demonstration clear at all. The Indian sources had deliberately blurred and minimized the information, so that the Western media had, in good faith, not deemed it worth mentioning. If six weeks later Brian Barron reported the number as more than a million demonstrators, it was not to correct this earlier lapse, but because of a different psychology. His aim was not to deny the importance and magnitude of the Hindu movement which he detests so much, but on the contrary to make it into a titillatingly gruesome dinosaur: the TV consumers have heard enough about Muslim fundamentalism, so if you want to get them interested in a new brand of fundamentalism, you have to make it extra big and colourful.

Another example is the news concerning the Indian attitude to the second Gulf War in early 1991. The Delhi correspondent for the Flemish radio station BRTN said that the Indian population was on the side of Saddam, against the Anglo-American forces (and their Saudi employers). That is just what the Times of India editorial had said a few days earlier. In fact, the Indian people was not on Saddam's side at all. The Hindus had always cheered for Israel in its wars with the Arabs, and now they were all for the defeat of this Arab Hitler who had announced he would "burn half of Israel with chemical weapons". The Muslim support for Saddam's jihad against the Crusaders was not exactly massive either. Firstly, millions of Indian Muslims personally suffered when they or their relatives lost their jobs in Iraq and Kuwait as a result of Saddam's annexation of Kuwait. Secondly, most Muslim leaders are financed by the Arab monarchies (including Kuwait), and they sided with their paymasters, either openly or by their quiet refusal to support Saddam. The only ones who supported Saddam were the hard core of the Nehruvian establishment (who forced the Chandra Shekhar government to stop allowing American war planes to land in Bombay), and the communists with their visceral anti-Americanism. A strike imposed on the communists with their visceral anti-Americanism. A strike imposed on the Calcutta dockers by the Communist trade-union was about the only sign of Indian support for Saddam, but our correspondent played it up as merely one example of a nation-wide movement. I hope it was in good faith on his part, but for the Times of India there cannot be such a benefit of the doubt.

Foreign correspondents in Delhi should realize that the Indian media and academia are entirely untrustworthy when it comes to reporting on the Hindu-Muslim conflict. When you report the truth about the democratic opposition in China or Tibet, you don't copy the People's Daily. When you want to know the truth about the Kurdish freedom struggle, you don't trust the Iraqi state radio. So, when you want to understand the Hindu backlash, you don't believe strictly partisan sources like the Times of India, or party-line historians like those from JNU or AMU.

If a Mr. Vijay Singh writes in *Le Monde Diplomatique* an article full of secularist invective titled: Hindu Fundamentalism, a Menace for India, it is simply the reflection of a vested interest in blackening Hinduism, though it is sold as an in-depth comment by a first-hand observer. It so happens that the article is partly an unacknowledged quotation from the introductory chapter of the book "Understanding the Muslim Mind" by Rajmohan Gandhi, a party politician of Iman Bukhari's favourite Janata Dal (nicknamed Jinnah Dal). If in another issue of the same prestigious French monthly, Mrs. Francine R. Frankel mouths all the worn-out secularist slogans against what she calls the "Violent Offensive of Hindu Extremists", it merely proves her incapability of reading her Indian sources with the distance befitting partisan pamphlets. It is quite a shameful matter that Western media have swallowed and reproduced many similar motivated distortion.

The extreme ignorance and gullibility of the foreign press provides the negationists with a strategic cover. Most English-knowing Indians believe that the Western intelligentsia is more objective and competent, and they keep on believing this even in domains where the West is completely ignorant and incompetent. So the negationists feel supported in the back by an outside world which they can manipulate but which many in India still consider as a standard of truth. If the Hindu leadership had taken the trouble of studying the mental determinants of India's political configuration, it would have blown this cover away by spreading first-hand information to the foreign media, and educating them about the Stalinist-Islamic grip on the Indian establishment.

In Great Britain and the United States, the anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim bias in India reporting can partly be explained by the political tilt towards Pakistan (now waning because of Pakistan's nuclear ambitions). Thus, the

prestigious British weekly The Economist has, in a predictably negative article about nationalism and separatism, held up the creation of Pakistan as an undisputably justified case of separatism (small wonder that British Muslims are imitating their Indian Muslim grandfathers and demanding a separate "non-territorial state of British Muslims", justifiable on exactly the same grounds). A more universal reason is that they never get to know the Hindu viewpoint from competent and eloquent spokesmen: firstly, these have practically no access to the national English-language press, which Western correspondents in Delhi faithfully copy because they are too lazy to seek out news for themselves; secondly, the Hindus themselves have not yet sufficiently realized the importance of public relations.

The most important reason is probably the political atmosphere in Europe which demands that for the sake of anti-racism and multiculturalism, Islam as the most conspicuous and assertive guest culture in Europe gets painted in rosy colours. The result of this imperative not to expose Muslim fanaticism is that even avowedly Christian papers in the West keep silent about the ongoing persecution of Christian papers and other minorities in the Middle East. Christians cherish the illusion of a dialogue with Islam, so they will not offend their Muslim partners by raising inconvenient issues like the status of religious minorities in Muslim countries. Now, if the West does not stand up for its persecuted Christian brethren, how much less will it be bothered about the idolatrous Hindus.

And so, Western India-watchers go on licking the boots of the aggressor, and keep on twisting contemporary news in the media, and to a lesser extent even historical facts in academic publications, to the advantage of the Muslim side. They have not invented the Indian brand of negationism, but they are amplifying and fortifying it.

2.6 BANNING INCONVENIENT BOOKS

A consequence of the negationist orientation of the Indian state's religious policy, is the readiness to ban books critical of Islam at the slightest suggestion by some mullah or Muslim politician. It is symptomatic that India was the first country to ban Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, at the insistence of Syed Shahabuddin, MP (in exchange, with some other concessions, for his calling off a march on Ayodhya). Among other banned books, we may mention pamphlet-like but nonetheless truthful books like Colin Maine's *"The Dead hand of Islam"* or A. Ghosh's *"The Koran and the Kafir"*, which list what the Quran has in store for the unbelievers; but also more prestigious books like R.M. Eaton's *"Sufis of Bijapur"*, which debunks the myth of the Sufis as bringers of a tolerant Islam (in fact they were not only fanatical preachers against idolatry, but also spies and sometimes mercenaries).

In March 1991, Ram Swarup's book *"Understanding Islam through Hadis"* was banned, after the Hindi version had already been banned in 1990. This happened after two committees set up by the Delhi administration had screened the book and found it unobjectionable, and after the judge had dismissed the plea for prosecution of its publisher, under the pressure of Muslim demonstrations. This book is a faithful summary of the *Sahih al-Muslim*, one of the two most authoritative Hadis collections (acts of the Prophet). According to the fundamentalist party *Jamaat-i Islami* the book contained "distortion and slander", and as an example of this slanderous distortion, it mentions this passage: "Mohammed saw Zaynab in half-naked condition, and he fell in love with her". With this revelation, the fundamentalists managed to get some agitation going, and the book was banned.

The interesting thing is that the quoted passage comes straight from the original Hadis, and is not a slanderous distortion at all. The agitation against the book reveals an important fact about the Muslim community: the ordinary Muslim does not know the contents of Quran and Hadis, and projects on Mohammed his own moral ideals, which he largely shares with his non-Muslim fellow-men. Because of his attachment to the mental image of a morally perfect Mohammed, he is shocked when he gets confronted with the historical Mohammed. Among the many historical acts of

Mohammed is his arranging the hand-over to himself of Zaynab, the beautiful wife of his adopted son. The fact that a revelation from Allah came to legitimize the marriage between Mohammed and Zaynab (which was a breach of the tribal incest taboo), became the classic illustration of the view that the Quran is nothing but the self-interested product of Mohammed's own mind.

This ignorance about the historical Mohammed, both among the common Muslims and among the Hindus, is precisely what the banned book wanted to do something about, in keeping with the Indian Constitution's injunction to "develop the scientific temper". But the Nehruvian establishment (which includes the Congress Party and its Janata Dal offshoot) has no liking for free research into the contents of Islamic doctrine and history, and in spite of loud slogans about secularism, the administration gave in to the Muslim fanatics. None of the so-called secularist intellectuals has bothered to protest against this obscurantist act of censorship.

The official motivation for this banning of meritortious books is that they have been written with the intention of insulting a religion or inciting communal conflict (art. 153A and art. 295A of the Indian Penal Code). Under section 95 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the executive power must take action against its initial users. For, according to some, there is a bok which fulfils the description given in the Penal Code, even to a far greater extent than the already banned book; but which is recited and invested with supreme authority in state-subsidized schools and in prayer-houses in every town and village of india. This objectionable book is known as the Quran.

In 1984 a citizen of India, H.K. Chakraborty, filed a petition with the West Bengal state government to ban the Quran. He added a list of 37 Quran verses which "preach cruelty, incite violence and disturb public peace" (to use the terminology of the Penal Code), 17 verses which "promote, on grounds of religion, feelings of enmity, hatred and ill-will between different communities in India", and 31 verses which "insult other religions as also the religious beliefs of other communities". Indeed, even after subtracting some verses which could be regarded as legitimate polemics (esp. against the Christian belief in Incarnation), there are about 60 passages in the Quran that formulate a doctrine of demonization of non-Muslims, and of hatred and war against them. If the Indian laws prohibit communal hate

propaganda, Mr. Chakraborty was right in considering the Quran as an excellent candidate for banning. But even after reminder-letters, the West Bengal authorities gave no response.

At this stage, Mr. Chakraborty met Chandmal Chopra, an adherent of the extremely non-violent Jain sect, who had taken up the study of the Quran in order to understand the plight of the Hindus in Bangladesh, who are gradually being chased from their ancestral homeland by the Muslims. In 1985 Chandmal Chopra filed a petition with the Calcutta high Court, asking for a ban on the Quran. He added a list with reprehensible verses from the Quran: 29 passages from the Quran (1 to 8 verses in length) that incite violence against unbelievers, 15 which promote enmity, 26 which insult other religions.

Some typical examples are: "Mohammed in Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are merciless for the unbelievers but kind to each other." (Q.48:29) "Make war on them until idolatry does not exist any longer and Allah's religion reigns universally." (Q.8:39, also 2:193) "We break with you; hatred and enmity will reign between us until ye believe in Allah alone." (Q. 60.4) "The Jews and Christians and the Pagans will burn forever in the fire of hell. They are the vilest of all creatures." (Q.98:51) There are dozens of Quran verses like this which in their unanimity cannot be dismissed as "isolated, mistranslated" little accidents "quoted out of context".

Chandmal Chopra stated in his writ petition: "The cited passages in the Quran... arouse in Muslims the worst sectarian passions and religious fanaticism, which has manifested itself in murders, massacres, plunder, arson, rape and destruction or desecration of sacred places both in historical and in the contemporary period, not only in India but in large parts of the world."

The petition created a lot of furore in Calcutta and abroad. Muslims created street riots. The government intervened and put heavy pressure on the judicial process. The secret service was put to work to find possible objectionable biographical data of the petitioner. The court used some dirty tricks to disturb the petitioner's case, like changing dates and changing the object of a session to which the petitioner had been summoned, during the

same session itself, with apparent foreknowledge of the government's counsel.

Both the authorities and the court violated the secular basis of the Indian Constitution by using as justification for their policy c.q. judgement a statement of religious belief. The Marxist West Bengal government stated in its affidavit: "The Quran contains the words of God Almighty revealed to His last Prophet Mohammed... As the Holy Quran is a Divine Book, no earthly power can sit in judgement on it, and no court of law has jurisdiction to adjudicate it."

The judge dismissed the petition on this ground: "Banning or forfeiture of the Quran... would amount to abolition of the Muslim religion itself." Indeed, the very text which preaches war against the unbelievers is the core text of Islam, so abolition of Islamic hate propaganda amounts to abolition of Islam itself. Islam without hatred is not Islam. The judge further observed: "This book is not prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between religions. Because of the Quran no public tranquillity has been disturbed upto now..." - a resounding statement of negationism.

This verdict was only what the petitioner expected: because of political pressure, an anti-Quran verdict was simply unthinkable, and moreover, the Penal Code keeps scriptures and classics outside its own purview. The petitioner has made it clear that he considers book-banning counterproductive, and that the controversial petition was meant to direct public attention towards the Quran's contents: people should read it, because Indian citizens have a right to know why their country is plagued with never-ending religious riots.

When Chandmal Chopra had the documents of the legal dispute published, the administration decided to prosecute him and his publisher on the basis of the very same Penal Code articles which he had invoked to request a ban on the Quran. The case is still pending.

Beside H.K. Chakraborty's and Chandmal Chopra's petitions, a third text which pointed at the Quran as a source of religious violence, was a poster published in Delhi (1986) by I.S. Sharma and Rajkumar Arya, prominent members of the Hindu Mahasabha, a small political party more extreme than the BJP. The poster carried the title: "Why do riots break out in this country?" It showed 24 Quran verses, such as: "Fight the unbelievers in

your surroundings, and let them find harshness in you" (Q.9:123), and : "Kill the unbelievers wherever ye find them,, capture and besiege them and prepare them every kind of ambush" (Q.9.5).

Both publishers were arrested on the basis of arts. 153A and 295A. However, they were acquitted. The judged ruled that they had made a "fair criticism", for: "With all due respect to the holy Quran, an attentive perusal of the verses shows that these are indeed harmful and preach violence and have the potential to cause conflicts between the Muslims and the others." An appeal against the court ruling is still pending.

This criticism of the Quran pulls the carpet from under the negationists' feet. The enmity between Muslims and Pagans is clearly not a back-projection from contemporary artificially created religio-political tensions. Neither is it a conflict which developed historically long after Mohammed and which can be reduced to socio-economical factors. This enmity is, on the contrary, present in the very core of Islamic doctrine.

With this information about Quranic doctrine, we find that the negationist thesis is not only contradicted by a massive body of authentic evidence; it is also highly implausible in itself. For, the thesis that Islam in India was not systematically (proportionately to its possibilities in given situations) in conflict with other religions, claims in fact that Islam in India deviated from its own principles, and behaved completely uncharacteristically for centuries on end. It is methodologically more usual to provisionally assume a consistent and probable behaviour (viz. that adherents of a God-given call to war against the unbelievers effectively make war on the unbelievers, and that a religion which persecuted other religions everywhere else, did the same in India), and only give this up if positive evidence for a less plausible and more inconsistent course has been found. But what positive evidence there is, points in the opposite direction: a long list of Muslim invaders and rulers faithfully put the Quranic injunctions into practice.

The problem of book-banning and censorship on Islam criticism is compounded by the related problem of self- censorship. Thus, when in late 1992, the famous columnist Arun Shourie wanted to publish a collection of his columns on Islamic fundamentalism, esp. the Rushdie and Ayodhya affairs (Indian Controversies), the publisher withdrew at the last moment, afraid of administrative or physical reprisals, and the printer also backed

out. Earlier, Shourie had been lucky to find one paper willing to publish these columns, for most Indian newspapers strictly keep the lid on Islam criticism. Hindu society is a terrorized society.

A final aspect of the ban (sometimes legal, mostly imposed by secularist convention) on criticism of Islam is that it is the re-institution of an old Islamic rule. When the Christians in Syria in the first century of Islam were forced to submit, they had to sign a long list of promises to their Islamic overlords. These comprised the well-known conditions imposed on the zimmi, but also some extra ones, including "not to teach our children the Quran". Like Mohammed, his successors found it hard to counter the numerous objections to the contradictions and unethical injunctions in the Quran, which perceptive infidels kept on raising. It was logical that they prohibited the study of the Quran by non-Muslims, in order to preemptively disarm future anti-Islamic polemicists. This ban by the theocratic caliphate on unfriendly inspection of the Quran is now re-instituted in India in the name of secularism.

2.7 THE NEGATIONISTS' SECOND FRONT

Not satisfied with denying the crimes of Islam, the negationists have recently made a big effort to spread the notion that Hinduism itself is guilty of just the same things of which it accuses Islam. Remember, Holocaust negationists always allege and highlight Israeli injustice against the Palestinians: if you prove that the victim is not so innocent, it will ultimately become questionable that he was a victim at all. If ever the denial of Muslim fanaticism has to be given up, a second line of defence (or counter-attack) will be ready: accusing Hinduism of a similar fanaticism.

For example, in the Indian media you regularly come across the contention that "the Hindus destroyed Nalanda Buddhist university". This is a plain lie: under several Hindu dynasties, Nalanda flourished and was the biggest university in the world for centuries; it was destroyed by the Muslim invader Bakhtiar Khilji in 1200. But if you repeat a lie often enough, it gains currency, and now many Indians have come to believe that Buddhism had been replaced by Hinduism as India's chief religion in a most violent manner.

In reality, Buddhism had always been a minority religion in India, confined to nobles and traders; before its disappearance around 1200 AD, it had been partly reabsorbed by mainstream Hinduism; otherwise it co-existed peacefully with other Hindu sects, often sharing the same temple-complexes. The historical allegations of violent conflicts between mainstream Hinduism and Buddhism can be counted on one hand. It is not Brahminical onslaught but Islam that chased Buddhism from India.

In Central Asia, Islam had wiped out Buddhism together with Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, and whatever other religion it encountered. The Persian word for idol is but, from Buddha, because the Buddhists with their Buddha-status were considered as the idol-worshippers par excellence. The Buddhists drew the wrath of every Muslim but-shikan (idol-breaker), even where they had not offered resistance against the Muslim armies because of their doctrine of non-violence. As a reminder of the Buddhist past of Central Asia, the city name Bukhara is nothing but a corruption of vihara, i.e. a Buddhist monastery; other Indian names include Samarkhand and Takshakhand, i.e. Tashkent. In India, Buddhism was a much easier target than other sects and traditions, because it was completely centralized

around the monasteries. Once the monasteries destroyed and the monks killed, the Buddhist community had lost its backbone and was helpless before the pressure to convert to Islam (as happened on a large scale in East Bengal).

A handful of negationist historians have tried to substantiate the allegations against Hinduism and spared no effort to collect instances of Hindus acts of persecution. We will take a look at them here. It would take a whole volume to sum up Aurangzeb's career as an iconoclast and persecutor, but the Hindu record of persecution will not take us more than a few pages.

To my knowledge, all the alleged cases of intra-Hindu persecution have been summed up in "Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya by prof. R.S. Sharma, the chapter in Communalism and the Writing of Indian History" contributed by prof. Harbans Mukhia, and most explicitly Cultural Transactions and Early India by Prof. Romila Thapar. According to Romila Thapar, "the insistence on the tradition of religious tolerance and non-violence as characteristic of Hinduism... is not borne out by historical evidence". Given their strong motivation, we need not assume that they have overlooked incidents that could be useful for the case they are making.

The two best-known cases, involving Pushyamitra Shunga and Shashank, cannot withstand historical criticism. The non-contemporary story (which surfaces more than three centuries after the facts) about Pushyamitra's offering money for the heads of monks is rendered improbable by firm historical facts of his allowing and patronizing monasteries and Buddhist universities in his domains. After Ashoka's lavish sponsorship of Buddhism, it is perfectly possible that Buddhist institutions fell on slightly harder times under the Shungas, but persecution is still another matter. The famous historian of Buddhism Etienne Lamotte has observed: "To judge from the documents, Pushyamitra must be acquitted through lack of proof." The only reason to sustain the suspicion against Pushyamitra, once it has been levelled, is that "where there is smoke, there must be fire" - but that piece of received wisdom is presupposed in every act of slander as well.

Hsuan Tsang's story from hearsay about Shashank's devastating a monastery in Bihar, killing the monks and destroying Buddhist relics, only a few years before Hsuan Tsang's own arrival, is contradicted by other elements in his

own report. Thus, according to the Chinese pilgrim, Shashank threw a stone with the Buddha's footprint into the river, but it was returned through a miracle; and he felled the bodhi tree but a sapling from it was replanted which miraculously grew into a big tree overnight. So, the fact of the matter was that the stone and the tree were still there in full glory. In both cases, the presence of the footprint-stone and the fully grown bodhi tree contradict Hsuan Tsang's allegations, but he explains the contradiction away by postulating miracles (which everywhere have a way of mushrooming around relics, to add to their aura of divine power). If we do not accept miracles, we conclude that the bodhi tree which Hsuan Tsang saw, and which was too big to have been a recently replanted sapling, cannot have been felled by Shashank.

Hsuan Tsang is notorious for his exaggerations and his insertions of miracle stories, and he had to explain to China, where Buddhism was reaching its peak, why it was declining in India. It seems safer to base our judgement on the fact that in his description of Buddhist life in the Ganga basin, nothing shows the effects of recent persecutions. In fact, Hsuan Tsang himself gives a clue to the real reason of pre-Islamic Buddhist decline, by describing how many Buddhist monasteries had fallen into disuse, esp. in areas of lawlessness and weak government, indicating that the strength of Buddhism was in direct proportion to state protection and patronage. Unlike Brahminism, which could sustain itself against heavy odds, the fortunes of Buddhist monasticism (even more than those of the Christian abbeys in early medieval Europe) were dependent upon royal favours, as under Ashoka, the Chinese early T'ang dynasty, and the rulers of Tibet and several Southeast-Asian countries.

A third story, about a 12th century king Harsha of Kashmir, is apparently true but has nothing to do with religious persecution: he plundered Hindu temples of all sects including Buddhism, in his own kingdom, without bothering to desecrate them or their keepers apart from lucrative plunder. It is the one genuine case of a ruler plundering not out of religious motives but for the gold. There is no known case of a Muslim marauder who merely stole from temples without bothering to explicitly desecrate them, much less of a Muslim ruler who plundered the sanctuaries of his own religion. Moreover, Kalhana's history book *Rajatarangini* relates this story with the comment: "Promoted by the Turks in his employ, he behaved like a

Turk." This Harsha employed Turkish mercenaries (which his successors would regret, for they spied and ultimately grabbed power), and these Muslims already had a firm reputation of plundering temples with a good conscience.

Number four is the attack by the Paramara king Subhataverman (1193-1210) on Gujrat, in which "a large number of Jain temples in Dabhoi and Cambay" were plundered (not "destroyed" or "desecrated"). Harbans Mukhia cites this as proof that "many Hindu rulers did the same [as the Muslims, i.e. destroy] with temples in enemy- territory long before the Muslims had emerged as a political challenge to these kingdoms." However, it is well-known that when Subhatavarman acceded to the throne, the Muslims had more than emerged: North India was being ravaged by Mohammed Ghor's decisive campaign of conquest. As a proof that Hindus outside the Islamic sphere of influence practised persecution, this incident will not do. On the contrary, if the report is correct, then the background may well be similar to the attested case of Harsha of Kashmir: inspired by the Turks, he behaved like a Turk.

Another case is the recurrent conflicts between the Shaiva and the Vaishnava renunciates in Ayodhya. Prof. R.S. Sharma quotes a description from 1804, which talks of "soldiers taking pleasure in battle", "misery", "great fear" and "shelter in secret places", but no death toll is given, in fact no killing is mentioned in so many words. But prof. Sharma concludes nonetheless: "The passage given above is sufficient to expose the myth of tolerance practised by medieval Hindu religious leaders."

Hindu tradition acknowledges that a rivalry between Shaivas and Vaishnavas disturbed life in Ayodhya: it was the context in which Tulsidas decided to write the Ramcharitmanas. In order to emphasize the superficial and erroneous character of the conflict between the followers of Shiva and those of Vishnu (and his incarnation Rama), Tulsidas made Shiva the storyteller of his Rama biography. Shiva and Vishnu are one, and devotees who don't understand this, well, they have to learn it. There is no similar record of any Islamic authority who has said that Shiva and Allah are one, nor Ram and Rahim, nor Kashi and Kaaba. All this "oneness of all religions" rhetoric is a strictly Hindu projection of the oneness of the different Hindu gods and traditions on a juxtaposition of radically

incompatible notions from Islam and Hinduism. Whereas the opposition between Ram and Rahim, between Kashi and Kaaba, led to endless persecutions and a Partition, such things have not happened between Shaivas and Vaishnavas. All that Prof. Sharma can show, is a riot which was not bigger than those which take place between drunken football fans.

As we might expect from Marxists who seek to mould rather than inform public opinion, this listing of evidence has been done with some editing. Thus, Romila Thapar writes that "the Shaivite saint Jnana Sambandar is attributed with having converted the Pandya ruler from Jainism to Shaivism, whereupon it is said that 8,000 Jainas were impaled by the king". She omits that this king, Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman, is also described as having first persecuted Shaivas; that Sambandar vanquished the Jainas not in battle but in debate (upon which the king converted from Jainism to Shaivism); and that he had escaped Jaina attempts to kill him. Unlike the Muslim persecutions, this Shaiva-Jaina conflict was clearly not a one-way affair. For the sake of blackening Hinduism, the Buddhists and Jains had to be depicted as hapless victims, and their share in the intra- Hindu violence had to be concealed.

It is even a matter of debate whether this persecution has occurred at all: the Hindus were never careful historians, and like Hsuan Tsang they mixed legend and historical fact, so that the modern historian can only accept their testimony if he finds supportive outside (epigraphical and archaeological) evidence. Unlike the conscientious Muslim chronicles or Kalhana's Rajatarangini, this story about Sambandar comes in the form of a local legend with at most a historical core. Nilkanth Shastri, in his unchallenged History of South India, writes about it: "This, however, is little more than an unpleasant legend and cannot be treated as history." I admit that this sounds like Percival Spear's statement that Aurangzeb's persecutions are "little more than hostile legend". However, Mr. Spear's contention is amply disproven by a lot of contemporary documents including the royal orders to kill Pagans and destroy Pagan institutions, as well as by eye-witness accounts; such evidence has not been offered at all in the case of Jnana Sambandar.

Warned by this unmistakable case of distortion of evidence, we take the rest of the list cum grano salis. But at least, the next incident is reported by two seemingly independent sources: the persecution of Buddhists by the Huna

king Mihirakula in Kashmir. Romila Thapar herself admits that Hsuan Tsang's account about "the destruction of 1.600 Buddhist stupas and sangharamas and the killing of thousands of monks and lay-followers" sounds exaggerated, but she has faith in Kalhana's more detailed version which mentions "killing innocent people by the hundreds".

But Hsuan Tsang gives an interesting detail which does not sound like a fairy-tale and may well be historical. Mihirakula, "wishing to apply his leisure to the study of Buddhism", asked the Buddhist sangha to appoint a teacher for him. But none of the more accomplished monks was willing, so they appointed a monk who had the rank of a servant. The king found this procedure insulting, and ordered the destruction of the Buddhist church in his kingdom. This king was not anti-Buddhist, was open-minded and took a sincere interest in Buddhism. But once a king's ego is hurt, he can get violent, regardless of his religion. That is regrettable, but it is something else than religious fanaticism.

When a commander in the service of the Buddhist emperor Ashoka was angered by the Buddhist monks' refusal to let the king meddle in their affairs, he had 500 of them killed. The massacre had nothing to do with religious intolerance, merely with hurt pride, and the Marxist historians have done well not to put it in their list. For the same reason, Mihirakula's rage against the impolite monks cannot be equated with the religiously motivated persecutions by the Muslim rulers. There was never a Muslim king who invited Pagan scholars to instruct him in the Pagan doctrines, the way Mihirakula asked for a Buddhist teacher. The only exceptions to this rule were the apostate emperor Akbar, who was vehemently criticized for it by the Muslim clergy, and Dara Shikoh, who was executed for apostasy by his brother Aurangzeb.

Another incident of intra-Hindu persecution quoted from Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, is "an earlier persecution of Buddhists in Kashmir and the wilful destruction of a vihara, again by a Shaivite king". There is an interesting little tailpiece to this incident: "But on this occasion the king repented and built a new monastery for the Buddhist monks". This proves that a substantial number, if not all, of the monks had survived the persecution. But more importantly, it highlights something completely unknown in the long history of Islamic fanaticism: remorse. This Shaivite king knew at heart that intolerance was wrong, and when he had regained

his self-control, he made up for his misdeed. Such a thing has never been done by Mohammed, or by Ghaznavi or Aurangzeb. If any proof was needed for the radical difference between the systematic persecutions by the Muslims and the rare aberration into isolated acts of intolerance by Hindus, Prof. Romila Thapar has just given it.

The next case: "The Jaina temples of Karnataka went through a traumatic experience at the hands the Lingayats or Virashaivas in the early second millennium AD". If all they suffered was trauma they were well-off in comparison with the thousands of temples destroyed by the Muslims in the same period. After a time of peaceful co-existence, which Romila Thapar acknowledges, "one of the temples was converted into a Shiva temple. At Hubli, the temple of the five Jinas was converted into a panchalingeshwara Shaivite temple, the five lingas replacing the five Jinas in the sancta. Some other Jaina temples met the same fate."

To be sure, conversions of the temples have indeed happened, and the panchalingeshwara temple may well be a case in point. Yet, that does not prove there was persecution. When rivalling sects entered public debate, they often put in high wagers, esp. the promise to convert to be winner's sect. In such a case, the temple or ashram was taken along into the new sect. Here, it could well be such a case of peaceful handover: after all, the temples were not destroyed. Against this, Prof. Thapar informs us: "An inscription at Ablur in Dharwar eulogizes attacks on Jaina temples as retaliation for opposition to Shaivite worship."

Here we may have another case of distorting evidence by means of selective quoting. The inscription of which Prof. Thapar summarizes a selected part, says first of all that the dispute arose because the Jains tried to prevent a Shaiva from worshipping his own idol. It further relates that the Jains also promised to throw out Jina and worship Shiva if the Shiva devotee performed a miracle, but when the miracle was produced, they did not fulfil their promise. In the ensuing quarrel, the Jina idol was broken by the Shaivas. The most significant element is that the Jain king Bijjala decided in favour of the Shaivas when the matter was brought before him. He dismissed the Jains and showered favours on the Shaivas.

Again, in this story the conflict is not a one-way affair at all. We need not accept the story at face value, as it is one of those sectarian miracle stories

(with the message: "My saint is holier than thy saint") which abound in the traditions surrounding most places of pilgrimage, be they Christian, Sufi or Hindu. Dr. Fleet, who has edited and translated this inscription along with four others found at the same place, gives summaries of two Lingayat Puranas and the Jain Bijjalacharitra, and observes that the story in this inscription finds no support in the literary traditions of the two sects. Bijjala's own inscription dated 1162 AD discovered at Managoli also does not support the story. The fact that the inscription under consideration does not bear a date or a definite reference to the reign of a king, does not help its credibility either. And do authentic inscriptions deal in miracles?

It is obvious that an inscription of this quality, if it had been cited in support of the Hindu claim to the Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi site, would have been dismissed by the Marxist historians as ridiculous and totally groundless. They would not view it as a serious obstacle to their foregone conclusion that there is absolutely definitely no indication whatsoever at all that a Hindu temple was forcibly replaced with a mosque. But in this case, we are asked to see it as evidence that Shaivas attacked Jain temples, and that Hindu tolerance is a myth.

Unlike the party-line historians of JNU, I do not think that historians working with conflicting testimonies are in a position to make apodictic statements and definitive conclusions,, so I will not completely dismiss this inscription as fantasy. It is possible that the Jainas had indeed fallen on hard times, and I do not dispose of material that would refute Prof. Thapar's contention that "in the fourteenth century the harassment of Jainas was so acute that they had to appeal for protection to the ruling power at Vijayanagar". Still, in size, duration, intensity and degree of ideological motivation, this conflict does not at all compare with the terror wrought by Islam. Incidentally, the ruling power at Vijayanagar, whose protection the Jains sought, was of course a Hindu power.

From Dr. Fleet's study of these sources, it seems that the Shaivas who were so hostile to the Jains, belonged to the Veerashaiva or Lingayat sect. And indeed, Prof. Thapar's next piece of evidence is that "inscriptions of the sixteenth century from the Srisailam area of Andhra Pradesh record the pride taken by Veerashaivas in beheading Shvetambara Jains". Now, the Veerashaivas were an anti-caste and anti-Brahminical sect. As these are considered good qualities, negationists have tried to link them to the

influence of Muslim missionaries ("bringing the message of equality and brotherhood"), who were indeed very active on India's West coast, where and when the Veerashaiva doctrine was developed. Let us assume there was indeed Muslim influence on the Veerashaiva sect. In that case, the negationists should acknowledge that the Veerashaivas' occasional acts of intolerance may equally be due to the influence of Islam. At any rate Brahminism cannot be held guilty of any misdeeds committed by this anti-Brahminical sect.

Finally, "in Gujrat, Jainism flourished during the reign of Kumarapala, but his successor [i.e. Ajayapala] persecuted the Jainas and destroyed their temples". In "The History and Culture of the Indian People", edited by R.C. Majumdar, we read about this: "The Jain chronicles allege that Ajayapala was a persecutor of the Jains, that he demolished Jain temples, mercilessly executed the Jain scholar Ramachandra, and killed Ambada, a minister of Kumarapala, in an encounter." Here, the alleged crime is related by the victims, not by the aggressors. It is possible that they exaggerated, but I see no reason to believe that they simply invented the story. So, let us agree that some temples were destroyed and at least one prominent Jain killed by Hindu aggressors. After all, the fanaticism displayed systematically by Islam has not come falling out of the sky, it exists in human nature and may occasionally pop up in contexts of tension; the difference is that Hindu acts of fanaticism were occasional and took place in spite of the doctrine, while Islamic fanaticism was systematic and merely an application of the doctrine.

The Marxist scholars who have collected this material, have omitted from their presentations the following cases of intra-Hindu persecution. The Mahavamsa says that the Buddhist king Vattagamini (29-17 BC) destroyed a Jain vihara on the same site. In the Shravana-Belagola epitaph of Mallishena, the Jain teacher Aklanka says that after a successful debate with Buddhists, he broke a Buddha statue with his own foot. There are some more instances of Jain- Buddhist conflict, but such material did not fit in with the designs of the negationists. They have this pet theory of Jainism and Buddhism as revolts against Brahminical tyranny, subsequently crushed out by the Brahminical reaction. In fact, the minor instances of intra-Hindu violence were distributed roughly proportionately between Brahminical, Buddhist, Jaina and other sects.

Among the above-mentioned reports of conflict between the different traditions within the Sanatana Dharma common wealth, several are probably unfounded, and several exaggerated. But as we have no firm evidence for this plausible hypothesis yet, let us assume for now that all these reports are simply correct and accurate. Let us moreover assume that a similar number of similar cases has gone unrecorded or unnoticed by the Marxist historians. Then, as a sum total, we still do not have the number of victims that Teimur made in a single day. Then we still do not have the number of temple demolitions that Aurangzeb wrought on his own. Then we still do not have the amount of glorification of temple destruction that we find in any of the diaries of Muslim conquerors like Babr or Firuz Shah Tughlaq or Teimur, or any of their chroniclers. The fanaticism record of Hinduism throughout millennia is dwarfed by the record of a single Ghaznavi, Ghorī or Aurangzeb and becomes completely negligible when compared with the total record of Islamic destruction and massacre in India. Moreover, a proper comparison of the fanaticism record of Hindu civilization would not be with Indian Islam, which represents a far smaller number of people, but with the entire Muslim world from the Prophet (peace be upon him) onwards.

Prof. Romila Thapar writes: "The desire to portray tolerance and non-violence as the eternal values of the Hindu tradition has led to the pushing aside of such evidence." What evidence? These few disputable cases will not do to prove that "Hindu tolerance is a myth". Hindus can afford to face this evidence squarely. A final judgement on whether Hinduism is tolerant or not should not depend on a few instances selected and edited to fit the preconceived picture, but on an over-view of the whole of Hindu history. The larger patterns of Hindu history leave no doubt that the impression cunningly created by the negationists is false.

Many foreign groups of people persecuted for their religion came to seek refuge in India. The Parsis have thrived. The heterodox Syrian Christians have lived in peace until the Portuguese came to enlist them in their effort to christianize India. The Jews have expressed their gratitude when they left for Israel because India was the only country where their memories were not of persecution but of friendly co-existence. Even the Moplah Muslims were accepted without any questions asked. All these groups were not

merely tolerated, but received land and material support for building places of worship.

What should really clinch the issue, is the tolerant treatment which the Muslims received after their reign of terror had been overthrown and replaced with Hindu rashtras like those of the Marathas, Sikhs, Rajputs and Jats. The Hindus could have emulated the policy of the Spanish Christians after the Reconquista, and given the Muslims the choice between conversion and emigration. With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that they would have saved many lives and India's unity by doing so, but forcing people to convert was not in conformity with their traditions.

When negationists are confronted with the evidence of persecutions by Islam, they are sure to mention a few cases where Muslim rulers patronized the building of Hindu temples. In some cases this is deceitful: in the JNU historians' pamphlet "The Political Abuse of History", they mention three such cases, but on closer inspection two of them do not concern Muslim rulers, but their Hindu ministers (in his rebuttal, Prof. A.R. Khan called this "not only concealment of evidence but also distortion of evidence"). But all right, a few Muslim rulers have made gifts to Hindu institutions. The negationists insist that these few gifts make up for the systematic Islamic persecutions. By contrast, their blatantly unequal standards do not allow them to accept the systematic patronage of the institutions of Buddhists and Jains by Hindu kings through the ages as compensation for the few isolated and aberrant cases of religious conflict.

In order to understand the problem of religious intolerance, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of conflict between religions. The first one is the ordinary conflict between two groups of people, who may derive their identity from their nationality, language family stock, economic interests, social class, or allegiance to a football team: any two people or groups of people can pick a quarrel. Therefore, two religious communities can have a conflict of interest as well, and behave just like any kind of group in conflict situation. By definition, every community can run into this kind of conflict (though some may remain non-violent throughout because of their doctrine). But this kind of conflict is temporary, dependent on an accidental state of affairs and always gravitates back to normal.

The second kind of religious conflict is not accidental, but is a consequence of the doctrines to which the community adheres. This is the case only with a handful of religions (including the Marxist quasi-religion), distinguished by their exclusivism and their ambition for conquest. Islam has been the most consistent in denying others the right to exist or at least to freely practise their religion. Its conflicts with other religions are merely the materialization of its doctrines.

This distinction between religious conflict as an accident or aberration, and religious conflict as the direct outcome of fanatical doctrines inherent in a religion, is fundamental to an understanding of the problem. In the first case, acts of fanaticism are committed in spite of the doctrine. The Vedas say that "the wise call the One by many names", and exhort us to "let good thoughts come to us from everywhere"; in the Bhagavad Gita Krishna assures the adherents of all religions that "those who pray with devotion to any god, it is to Me that they pray". Differences in religion are considered superficial and unimportant, therefore religious tolerance is the norm, and intolerance cannot be more than an aberration. But in the second case, acts of fanaticism are sanctioned by the doctrine, and are bound to happen on a substantial scale as long as the doctrine is taken seriously. "Enmity and hatred will reign between us until ye believe in Allah alone" says the Quran, and it is only logical that enmity and hatred have indeed reigned between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Of course, those with a bad conscience go out of their way to blur this distinction. Marxists insist on disregarding or blurring the distinction either because they want to blacken all religion, or because they are in league with Muslim fanatics.

Among those who like to say that "all are equally guilty", we also find the Christian missionaries. They too have a history of persecutions and temple destructions to cover up, not only in Europe and America, but in India as well. The Portuguese organized a branch of the Inquisition in Goa, and they practised conversion by force on a large scale. The French and British missionaries were less brutal, often resorting to subversion tactics and inducement by means of material advantages for converts, but they too have a record of temple destructions in India. Hundreds of churches contain rubble of the Hindu temples which they replaced. We may look a bit more

closely into one case which sums it all up: the Saint Thomas church on Mylapore beach in Madras.

According to Christian leaders in India, the apostle Thomas came to India in 52 AD, founded the Syrian Christian church, and was killed by the fanatical Brahmins in 72 AD. Near the site of his martyrdom, the Saint Thomas church was built. In fact this apostle never came to India, and the Christian community in South India was founded by a merchant Thomas Cananeus in 345 AD (a name which readily explains the Thomas legend). He led 400 refugees who fled persecution in Persia and were given asylum by the Hindu authorities. In Catholic universities in Europe, the myth of the apostle Thomas going to India is no longer taught as history, but in India it is still considered useful. Even many vocal secularists who attack the Hindus for relying on myth in the Ayodhya affair, off-hand profess their belief in the Thomas myth. The important point is that Thomas can be upheld as a martyr and the Brahmins decried as fanatics.

In reality, the missionaries were very disgruntled that these damned Hindus refused to give them martyrs (whose blood is welcomed as the seed of the faith), so they had to invent one. Moreover, the church which they claim commemorates Saint Thomas' martyrdom at the hands of Hindu fanaticism, is in fact a monument of Hindu martyrdom at the hands of Christian fanaticism: it is a forcible replacement of two important Hindu temples (Jain and Shaiva), whose existence was insupportable to Christian missionaries. No one knows how many priests and worshippers were killed when the Christian soldiers came to remove the curse of Paganism from Mylapore beach. Hinduism doesn't practise martyr-mongering, but if at all we have to speak of martyrs in this context, the title goes to these Shiva-worshippers and not to the apostle Thomas.

So, applying the old maxim that "attack is the best defence", the spokesmen of intolerant creeds falsely accuse the tolerant Hindus of the same intolerance. While nobody claims that Hinduism is without faults, or that Hindu society has never brought forth fanatical individuals, it is a plain lie that Hinduism has record of fanaticism similar (however remotely) to that of the three world-conquerors: Christianity, Islam and Mrxism.

2.8 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM NEGATIONISM

India has its own full-fledged brand of negationism: a movement to deny the large-scale and long-term crimes against humanity committed by Islam. This movement is led by Islamic apologists and Marxist academics, and followed by all the politicians, journalists and intellectuals who call themselves secularists. In contrast to the European negationism regarding the Nazi acts of genocide, but similar to the Turkish negationism regarding the Armenian genocide, the Indian negationism regarding the terrible record of Islam is fully supported by the establishment. It has nearly full control of the media and dictates all state and government parlance concerning the communal problem (more properly to be called the Islam problem).

Its techniques are essentially the same as those of negationists elsewhere :

1. Head-on denial: The crassest form of negationism is obviously the simple denial of the facts. This is mostly done in the form of general claims, such as: "Islam is tolerant", "Islamic Spain was a model of multicultural harmony", "the anti-Jewish hatred was unknown among Muslims until Zionism and anti-Semitism together entered the Muslim world from Europe". Since it is rare that a specific crime of Islam is brought to the public's notice, there is little occasion to come out and deny specific crimes. Exceptions are the Armenian genocide, officially denied in Turkey and the entire Muslim world, and the temple destructions in India, which have been highlighted in the Ayodhya debate but flatly denied by Syed Shahanuddin, Sushil Srivastava and many other pro-Babri polemicists.

The Rushdie affair was the occasion for negationism on a grand scale. There happens to be an unambiguous answer to the question: "Is it Islamic to kill those who voice criticism of the Prophet?" According to the media and most experts, the answer was definitely: no. According to the basic traditions of Islam, it was: yes. Mohammed as well as his immediate successors have killed critics, both in formal executions and in night-time stabbings. In Islamic law, the Prophet's example is valid precedent. At most there could be some quarreling over the procedure: some jurists thought that Rushdie should first be kidnapped to an Islamic country and given a chance to recant before an Islamic court, though the ayatollahs have ruled that no amount of remorse can save

Rushdie. If he stands by his book, even the so-called moderates think he must be killed. Islamic law punishes both apostasy and insults to the Prophet with the death penalty: twice there is no escape for Rushdie. In the Muslim world, several publications have restated the clear-cut Islamic provisions for cases like Rushdie's including *Ahaanat-i Rasool ki Sazaa* ("Punishment for Insulting the Prophet") by JNU Prof. Maulana Mohsin Udmani Nadwi, and *Muqaddas-i Ayat* ("The Sacred Verses") by Maulana Majid Ali Khan, both published by the Islamic Research Foundation, Delhi. Yet, the outside public was told by many experts that killing Rushdie is un-islamic.

Flat denial will work very well if your grip on the press and education media is sufficient. Otherwise, there is a danger of being shown up as the negationist one really is. In that case, a number of softer techniques are available.

2. Ignoring the facts: This passive negationism is certainly the safest and the most popular. The media and textbook-writers simply keep the vast corpus of inconvenient testimony out of the readers' view.
3. Minimizing the facts: If the inconvenient fact is pointed out that numerous Muslim chroniclers have reported a given massacre of unbelievers themselves, one can posit a priori that they must have exaggerated to flatter their patron's martial vanity - as if it is not significant enough that Muslim rulers felt flattered by being described as mass-murderers of infidels.

Apart from minimizing the absolute size of Islamic crimes, there is the popular technique of relative minimizing: make the facts look smaller by comparing them with other, carefully selected facts. Thus, one can say that "all religions are intolerant", which sounds plausible to many though it is patently false: in the Roman Empire only those sects were persecuted which had political ambitions (Jews when they fought for independence, Christians because they sought to take over the Empire and outlaw all other religions, as they effectively did), while the others enjoyed the status of *religio licita*; similarly with the Persian Empire and many other states and cultures.

An oft-invoked counterweight for the charge-sheet against Islam, is the fanaticism record of Christianity. it is indeed well-known that

Christianity has been guilty of numerous temple destructions and persecutions. But the reason for this fanaticism is found in the common theological foundation of both religions: exclusivist prophetic monotheism. The case against Christianity is at once a case against Islam. Moreover, in spite of its theologically motivated tendency to intolerance, Christianity has had to go through the experience of "live and let live" because in its formative period, it was but one of the numerous sects in the pluralist Roman empire.

Islam never had this experience, and in order to bring out its full potential of fanaticism, Christianity has needed the influence of Islam on a few occasions. Thus, it is no coincidence that Charlemagne, who defeated the Saxons by force, was the grandson of Charles Martel, who defeated the Islamic army in Poitiers; no coincidence either that the Teutonic knights who forcibly converted the Balts, were veterans of the Crusades, i.e. the campaign to liberate Palestine from Islam; nor is it a coincidence that the Spanish Inquisition emerged in a country that had needed centuries to shake off Islamic oppression. Finally, Christianity is, by and large, facing the facts of its own history, though it is still struggling with the need to own up the responsibility for these facts.

An even more general way of drowning Islamic fanaticism in relativist comparisons, is to point out that after all, every imperialism has been less than gentle. That may well be true, but then, we are not setting up cults for the Genghis Khans of this world. A religion should contribute to man's transcending his natural defects like greed and cruelty, and not sanction and glorify them.

4. Whitewashing: When one cannot conceal, deny or minimize the facts, one can still claim that on closer analysis,, they are not as bad as they seem. One can call right what is obviously wrong. This can go very far, e.g. in his biography of Mohammed, Maxime Rodinson declared unashamedly that the extermination of the Medinese Jews by Mohammed was doubtlessly the best solution. In numerous popular introductions to Islam, the fact that Islam imposes the death penalty on apostates (in modern terminology: that Islam opposes freedom of religion in the most radical manner) is acknowledged; but then it is explained that "since Islam was at war with the polytheists, apostasy

equalled treason and desertion, something which is still punished with death in our secular society". All right, but the point is precisely that Islam chose to be at war with the traditional religion of Arabia, as also with all other religions, and that it has made this state of war into a permanent feature of its law system.

5. Playing up unrepresentative facts: A popular tactic in negationism consists in finding a positive but uncharacteristic event, and highlighting it while keeping the over-all picture out of the public's view. For instance, a document is found in which Christians whose son has forcibly been inducted in the Ottoman Janissary army, express pride because their son has made it made it to high office within this army. The fact that these people manage to see the bright side of their son's abduction, is then used to prove that non-muslims were quite happy under Muslim rule, and to conceal the fact that the devshirme, the forcible conversion and abduction of one fifth of the Christian children by the Ottoman authorities, constituted a constant and formidable terror bewailed in hundreds of heart-rending songs and stories.

For another example, negationists always mentionn cases of collaboration by non-Muslims (Man Singh with the Moghuls, etc.) to suggest that these were treated as partners and equals and that Muslim rule was quite benevolent; when in fact every history of an occupation, even the most cruel one, is also the history of a collaboration. As has been pointed out, the Nazis employed Jewish guards in the Warsaw ghetto, disprove the Nazi oppression of the Jews.

6. Denying the motive: Negationists sometimes accept the facts, but disclaim their hero's responsibility for them. Thus, Mohammed Habib tried to exonerate Islam by ascribing to the Islamic invaders alternative motives: Turkish barbarity, greed, the need to put down conspiracies brewing in temples. In reality, those rulers who had secular reasons to avoid an all-out confrontation with the unbelievers, were often reprimanded by their clerical courtiers for neglecting their Islamic duty. The same clerics were never unduly worried over possible secular motives in a ruler's mind as long as these prompted him to action against the unbelievers. At any rate, the fact that Islam could be

used routinely to justify plunder and enslavement (unlike, say, Buddhism), is still significant enough.

7. Smokescreen: Another common tactic consists in blurring the problem by questioning the very terms of the debate: "Islam does not exist, for there are many Islams, with big differences between countries etc." It would indeed be hard to criticize something that is so ill-defined. But the simple fact is that Islam does exist: it is the doctrine contained in the Quran, normative for all Muslims, and in the Hadis, normative at least for all Sunni Muslims. There are differences between the law schools concerning minor points, and of course there are considerable differences in the extent to which Muslims are effectively faithful to islamic doctrine, and correspondingly, the extent to which they mix it with un-islamic elements.
8. Blaming fringe phenomena: When faced with hard facts of Islamic fanaticism, negationists often blame them on some fringe tendency, now popularly known as fundamentalism. This is said to be the product of post-colonial frustration, basically foreign to genuine Islam. In reality, fundamentalists like Maulana Maudoodi and Ayatollah Khomeini knew their Quran better than the self-deluding secularists who brand them as bad Muslims. What is called fundamentalism is in fact the original Islam, as is proven by the fact that fundamentalists have existed since long before colonialism, e.g. the 13th century theologian Ibn Taimiya, who is still a lighthouse for today's Maudoodis, Turabis, Madanis and Khomeinis. When Ayatollah Khomeini declared that the goal of Islam is the conquest of all non-Muslim countries, this was merely a reformulation of Mohammed's long-term strategy and of the Quranic assurance that God has promised the entire world to Islam. In the case of communism, one can shift the blame from Marx to Lenin and Stalin, but Islamic terrorism has started with Mohammed himself.
9. Arguments ad hominem: If denying the evidence is not tenable, one can always distort it by means of selective quoting and imputing motives to the original authors of the source material; or manipulating quotations to make them say the opposite of the over-all picture which the original author has presented. Focus all attention on a few real or imagined flaws in a few selected pieces, and act as if the entire corpus

of evidence has been rendered untrustworthy. To extend the alleged untrustworthiness of one piece of evidence to the entire corpus of evidence, it is necessary to create suspicion against those who present the evidence: the implication is that they have a plan of history falsification, that this plan has been exposed in the case of this one piece of evidence, but that it is only logical that such motivated history falsifiers are also behind the concoction of the rest of the alleged evidence.

If the discussion of inconvenient evidence cannot be prevented, disperse it by raising other issues, such as the human imperfections which every victim of crimes against humanity inevitably has (Jewish harshness against the Palestinians, Hindu untouchability); describe the demand for the truth as a ploy to justify and cover up these imperfections. If the facts have to be faced at all, then blame the victim. If people ignore or refute your distorted version of history, accuse them of distortion and political abuse of history. Slander scholars whose testimony is inconvenient; impute political or other motives to them in order to pull the attention away from the hard evidence they present.

10. Slogans: Finally, all discussion can be sabotaged with the simple technique of shouting slogans: prejudice, myth, "racism/communalism". Take the struggle from the common battlefield of arguments into the opponent's camp: his self-esteem as a member of the civilized company that abhors ugly things like prejudice and communalism. After all, attack is the best defence.

After summing up the forms of negationism, we have to look into its causes. The following factors come to mind:

1. Orientalism and Islamology: After the medieval Christian pamphlets against "Mohammed the impostor", not much has been published thematizing the ideological and factual crimes of Islam. Books on, say, "slavery in Islam" are extremely rare: the raw information that could fill such a publication will have to be found in more general publications, in which Islam is only referred to in passing, often without the author's realizing the implications for an evaluation of

Islam. It is often said (when introducing "refutations of prejudice") that people always associate Islam with intolerance; but finding a book specifically devoted to the subject of Islamic intolerance will be harder. How many millions have been killed by Islam simply because they were non-Muslims? Nobody has yet tabulated the figures available to prepare a general estimate. We can only notice that critical research of Islam is not exactly encouraged, and that there is an increasing tendency to self-censorship regarding Islam criticism. In part, this is due to much delayed reaction against the long-abandoned Christian polemical approach.

Now that Islamic Studies departments in Europe are increasingly manned by Muslims and sponsored by Islamic foundations and states, as has been the case in India for long, the climate for critical studies of Islam is only worsening. When comparing the first (pre-World War 2) edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden, Netherlands) with the new edition, it is striking how critical observations have been ironed out. But even in the past, Islam has enjoyed a rather favourable treatment in academic circles. Thus, about Islamic slavery the prominent Dutch Islamologist C. Snouck-Hurgronje wrote in 1887 (i.e. thirty years after the Americans had waged a war to impose the abolition of slavery in their southern states, and some seventy years after its abolition in the colonies): "For most slaves their abduction was a blessing... They themselves are convicted that it is their enslavement that has for the first time made them human."

The political context of the growth phase of Islamology provides a part of the explanation. Mature colonialism was not waging war against Islam, but sought the co-operation of the established social forces in the colonized populations. The British co-operation with the Indian Muslims is well-known; it is epitomized by the founding in 1906 of the Muslim League, which sought to "inculcate loyalty to the British Empire in the Indian Muslims". In French West Africa, in the same period, Islam was accepted as a factor of social stability, and General Lyautey pursued a dream of a Franco-Islamic synthesis culture in Algeria. In the 1930s, in the last European attempt at fresh colonization, the Italian Fascists actively supported the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa. But already since 1853 the colonial powers had

been supporting the Caliphate against a Christian power, Czarist Russia, esp. in the Crimean War (a mistaken war if ever there was one), and this had strongly contributed to climate of benevolence towards the Muslim culture.

2. Church policy: Christianity has for centuries waged a lively polemic against Islam, with Raimundus Lullus as probably the most remarkable exponent. Recently, this criticism has subsided. Worse, polemical works by clerics have been withdrawn or kept unpublished (such as, early this century, Father Henri Lammens' paper arguing that Mohammed's revelations were a psychopathological phenomenon). One reason is that the Church is aware of the similarity between Jesus' and Mohammed's missions, so that a criticism of the foundations of Islam may backfire on Christianity. The second reason is the fear that Christians in the Muslim world would have to pay for even ideological attack on Islam (that is why Church polemicists save their sharpest words for harmless religions like Hinduism). This fear also motivates other Church policies, such as the non-recognition of the state of Israel.

Meanwhile, the face of the Church has changed. A small but significant event in the wake of the Second Vatican Council was the deletion from the Saints' calendar of Our Lady of the Redemption of Slaves, whose feast was on 24 September. In the Middle Ages, there was a special clerical order and a whole fund-raising network devoted to the redemption ("buying back") of Christian slaves held in Barbary. Until the 19th century, coastal villages in Italy had watchtowers to alarm the people when a ship of the slave-catching Barbarese pirates was in sight. The terror of Islamic slavery was a permanent feature of Christian history from the 7th till the 19th century, but now the Church is working hard to erase this memory.

Today, its pastors are the most fervent pleaders for the rights of Islam. Muslims in Europe are for them a substitute for the disappearing parish members. Separate Christian institutions, whose reason of existence is being questioned, find a new legitimacy in the fact that Islam in its turn is also opening separate schools, charities and even political parties. Islam has become a sister religion regularly praised as a religion of peace.

3. Anti-colonialism: One of the ideological guidelines of anti-colonialism was: "Of the (ex-)colonized, nothing but good must be said." Therefore, mentioning the colonialism and mass slavery practised by the Muslims had become undesirable.

Add to this general taboo the warning that Islam criticism effectively implies support to Israel, described by Maxime Rodinson as a "colonial settler-state". If one acknowledges that Islam has always oppressed the Jews, one accepts that Israel was a necessary refuge for the Jews fleeing not only the European but also the Islamic variety of anti-Judaisms. Let us not forget that decolonization was followed immediately by renewed discrimination of and attacks on the Jewish and Christian minorities, and that those Jews who could get out have promptly fled to Israel (or France, in the case of Algeria). It is no coincidence that these Sephardic Jews are mostly supporters of the hard- liners in Israel.

4. The enemy's enemy is a friend: Many people brought up as Christians, or as nominal Hindus, never outgrow their pubescent revolt against their parents' religion, and therefore automatically sympathize with every rival or opponent of the religion they have come to despise. Because Islam poses the most formidable threat, they like it a lot.
5. Leftism: In this century, Islam has come to be advertised as a naturally leftist "religion of equality". This line has been developed by Muslim apologists such as Mohammed Habib, and they have even taken it as a rationalization of the irrational claim that Mohammed was the "last Prophet": after all, as the "prophet of equality", he had brought the ultimate message upon which no improvement is possible. Sir Mohammed Iqbal, one of the fathers of Pakistan, had claimed that "Islam equals Communism plus Allah". The Iranian Ayatollahs, by contrast, and most of the vocal Muslims after the Soviet-Islamic war in Afghanistan, have restated the orthodox position that Communism is un-Islamic, not only because of its atheism but also because of its rejection of free enterprise; the current claim is that Islam provides a "better form of equality" than Communism.

Even while Communists were slaughtered in Islamic Iran, and even while political analysts classify the Islamist movements as "extreme

rightist", most leftists have kept on cultivating some sympathy for Islam. During the Lebanese civil war, they fed us news stories about "leftist Muslims, rightist Christians", "Islamoprogressive, christianoreactionnaire".

Negationism in India is practised with the most prowess by historians and writers who are under the spell of Marxism. Lenin had wanted to use the Muslims against the French and British colonialists, but what was a tactical alliance for Lenin became a love-affair for the Indian Communists. However, it would be wrong to expect that the collapse of Soviet Communism and the inevitable decline of Communism in India will automatically lead to the dissolution of negationism. It has become a bias and a thought-habit for many people who have only vaguely been influenced by Marxism. Children mostly survive their parents, and certain forms of negationism may survive Indian Marxism for some time, unless a serious effort is made to expose it on a grand scale.

6. Rightist traditionalism: There is also a rightist sympathy for Islam. An obvious point of agreement is of course anti-Judaism. A subtler basis for sympathy is the so-called traditionalist current, which was represented by the converts Rene Guenon and Frithjof Schuon, and still has a following: it has been idealizing Islam and esp. Sufism as the preserver of the age-old philosophia perennis against modernity. In Russia, some Slavophile anti-Western groups now seek an alliance with Islam against the impending Americanization of their society. In the U.S., Christian fundamentalists and Islamic organizations are increasingly creating common platforms to speak out against trends of moral decay (abortion, pornography, etc.). Some of these phenomena of traditionalist alliance-building are quite respectable, but they are nevertheless conducive to Islam negationism.
7. Hindu cowardice: Even among so-called militant Hindus, there is a shameful eagerness to praise Islam and deny its criminal record. E.g., during the Ayodhya movement, many Hindu leaders have been pleading that the Muslims should renounce the Ram Janmabhoomi site because "genuine Islam is against temple demolition", so that a mosque standing on a demolished temple is not in conformity with Islamic law. This was, of course, blatantly untrue: Islamic scripture

and history prove that destroying all expressions of unbelief and idolatry is a duty and an honour for Muslims. The doctrines that have led to the temple destructions including the one on Ram Janmabhoomi, are still being taught in all Islamic schools.

Apart from being untruthful, this Hindu appeal to "genuine Islam's tolerance" was also bad debating tactics: if you say that temple demolition was standard Islamic practice, and that what had happened in Ayodhya was merely the local application of the general rule, the onus is on the Babri advocates to prove that the Babri Masjid was an exception; but if you say that the Babri Masjid was an exception to the rule of Islamic tolerance, the onus is on you to prove that in this case, an exceptional and uncharacteristic incident had taken place. It was also bad bargaining tactics: if you say that the Babri Masjid was merely one among thousands, then renouncing this one non-mosque would sound like a very low price for the Muslims to buy the Hindus' goodwill; but if you say that the Babri Masjid was an exceptional case, an insignificant incident amid the many big problems thrown up by history, you look petty by demanding the restoration of this one site. Short, Hindu leaders were damaging their own position by denying history and avoiding Islam criticism.

One could understand people telling lies when it serves their own interest; but people who tell lies when it is the truth that would serve their interest, really deserve to be kicked around. This truly strange and masochistic behaviour can only be understood if we keep in mind that Hindu society is a terrorized society. During the Muslim period, all those who stood up and spoke out against Islam were eliminated; and under Nehruvian rule, they were sidelined and abused. The oppressed Hindus started licking the boot that kicked them, and this has become a habit which in their slumber they have not yet identified and stopped.

8. Liberal Islam: In the Islamic world, it is unwise to attack Islam head-on. Yet, sometimes people in those countries feel the need to oppose Islamic phenomena and campaigns, such as the witch-hunt on un-Islamic cultural remnants, violence on the non-Muslims, extreme forms of gender inequality. In order to have a chance, these people have to use Islamic language: "Mohammed was actually against polygamy", "violence against others is in conflict with the tolerance

which Mohammed has taught us", "respect for other cultures is part of Islamic tradition". In order to press their humanist point, they have to formally identify with Islam and lie about its contents.

Many Muslims have started to believe their own rhetoric. If you point out to them that the Quran teaches intolerance and war against the unbelievers in the most explicit terms, many of them will sincerely protest, and not know what to say when you show them the Quranic passages concerned. There is no reason to doubt that the Moroccan authoress Fatima Mernissi genuinely believes in her own argument that the Quranic instructions on how to organize your polygamous household are to be read as an abolition of polygamy (albeit in veiled terms, because Allah, the same Allah Almighty who went straight against the prevalent customs of idolatry and pluralism, had to be careful not to offend the spirit of the times). Many nominal Muslims have outgrown Islamic values and developed a commitment to modern values, but their sentimental attachment to the religion imbibed in their childhood prevents them from formally breaking with Islam and makes them paint a rosy picture of it.

Among Muslim spokesmen, it is certainly not the fundamentalists who are the most active proponents of negationism. It is liberals like Asghar Ali Engineer who deny that Islam ordains war on the infidels. It is those who are acclaimed by Hindus as being good "secular" Muslims, like Saeed Naqvi, who go as far as to deny that the Partition of India was brought about by Muslims. An Islam that wants to be secular, cannot but be dishonest and untrue to itself. Unfortunately, a tolerant Islam is a contradiction, and a tolerant past for Islam to buttress the position of liberal Muslims, is a lie.

9. Muslims differing from Islam: Many people have a Muslim neighbour who is a fine man, and from this empirical fact they conclude: Islam cannot be all that bad considering our friend Mustapha. This one empirical fact gives them a tremendous resistance against all information about Islamic intolerance. People usually reduce the world to their own sphere of experience, and general historical facts of Islamic fanaticism are not allowed to disturb the private experience of good neighbourly relations.

Many nominal Muslims have retained from their Quran classes only some vague generalities about morality, and they normally go by their own conscience and sensibility without ever developing the doctrinally prescribed hostility towards non-Muslims. These good people but had Muslims can ignore but not change Islamic doctrine. They cannot prevent the Quranic message of hatred from infecting at least some of the more susceptible among their brethren.

There have certainly been situations where sane Muslims have calmed down their more riotous brethren, and such individuals do make a real difference. We should not make the Islamic mistake of judging people simply by their belonging or not belonging to the Muslim community, rather than by their human qualities. But the fact remains that the presence of a doctrine of intolerance as the official and identity-defining ideology of a community, exerts a constant pressure tending towards separatism and confrontation. The alleviating presence of the humanist factor even within the Muslim community should not be used to deny the ominous presence of Islamic factor.

"Those who deny history are bound to repeat it": that is what many critics of Holocaust negationism allege. This seems slightly exaggerated, though it is of course the well-wishers of Nazism who practise negationism. In the case of Islam, it is equally true that negationism is practised by the well-wishers of that same doctrine which has led to the crimes against humanity under consideration. While Nazism is simply too stained to get a second chance, Islam is certainly in a position to force unbelievers into the zimmi status (as is happening in dozens of Muslim countries in varying degrees), and even to wage new jihads, this time with weapons of mass-destruction. Those who are trying to close people's eyes to this danger by distorting or concealing the historical record of Islam are effective accomplices in the injustice and destruction which Islam is sure to cause before the time of its dissolution comes. Therefore, I consider it a duty of all intellectuals to expose and denounce the phenomenon of negationism whenever it is practised.

CHAPTER THREE - EXPOSING AND REFUTING NEGATIONISM

Negationism and history-distortion require a large-scale effort and a very strong grip on the media of information and education. As soon as the grip loosens, at least the most blatant of the negationist concoctions are bound to be exposed, and its propounders lose all credibility. In 1988, the schools in the Soviet Union decided to suspend the history exams because *"the history books are full of lies anyway"*. The great lies and distortions of Soviet historiography are now items in the gallery of ridicule.

3.1 ENTER VOICE OF INDIA

Just like the Russians have thrown Soviet historiography into the dustbin, Indian negationism will also be thrown out in the near future. The newly published second volume of *"Hindu temples, what happened to them"*, by the Indian historian Sitaram Goes (1921), is a mortal blow in the face of negationism. And there are more reasons for calling the book a milestone.

The author is, together with his friend, the linguist and philosopher Ram Swarup (1920), the leading light of the intellectual rearmament of the battered and despondent Hindu society. Born in 1921 in a poor family (though belonging to the merchant Agrawal caste) in Haryana, he took an M.A. in history in Delhi University, winning prizes and scholarships along the way. In his youth he was a Gandhian activist, organizing inter-caste dinners and participating in the Freedom Movement. In the forties, when the Gandhians themselves were drifting to the Left and adopting socialist rhetoric, he decided to opt for the original rather than the imitation, and joined the Communist Party. Within a few years, he left the Party in disgust, and participated in Ram Swarup's anti-communist organization in Calcutta, then as now the centre of Indian communism.

In the fifties he published a number of books exposing the lies that formed the backbone of communist propaganda. For instance, in "Whom shall we believe?", he compared the economic figures in official Russian and Chinese publications with the propaganda put out by the Communist Party of India and its fellow-travellers, and demonstrated the utterly deceitful nature of whatever creditability communism had acquired. As the cover of his newest publication proudly proclaims, "the numerous studies published by the movement in the fifties exist in cold print in many libraries and can be consulted for finding out how the movement anticipated by many years the recent revelations about communist regimes".

An aspect of history yet to be studied is how such anti-communist movements in the Third World were not at all helped (in spite of all allegations of CIA involvement) but rather opposed by Western interest groups whose understanding of communist ideology and strategy, and of many other political issues, was just too limited and blunt. The critique of communism formulated by these Indian thinkers was often intellectually

superior to most of what has been produced by European and American anti-communists in the Cold War period.

Shortly before the Chinese invasion (1962), which pin-pricked the balloon of prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's vainglorious brainchildren, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Indian-Chinese friendship as an axis of Asian stability, Sitaram Goel published a critique of Nehru's policy of friendship with communism, "In Defence of Comrade Krishna Menon". In it, he debunked the current fashion of attributing India's communist-leaning foreign policy to minister Krishna Menon, and demonstrated that Nehru himself had been a consistent communist sympathizer ever since his visit to the Soviet Union in 1927. Nehru had stuck to his communist sympathies even when the communists insulted him as prime minister with their unbridled swearology: he used to lick the boot that kicked him. Nehru's absolute refusal to support the Tibetans even at the diplomatic level when they were overrun by the Chinese army, cannot just be attributed to circumstances or the influence of collaborators: his hand-over of Tibet to communist China was quite consistent with his own political convictions.

Even though Sitaram Goel's stand was vindicated by the Chinese invasion, the book about Nehru cost him his job in a state-affiliated company. He went into business himself and set up a company of book import and export. In its margin,, he later started the non-profit publishing house Voice of India. Its aim is to defend Hinduism by placing before the public correct information about the situation of Hindu culture and society, and about the nature, motives and strategies of its enemies.

For, as the title of his book "Hindu society under siege" (1981) indicates, Hindu society has been suffering a sustained attack from Islam since the 7th century, from Christianity since the 15th century, and this century also from Marxism. The avowed objective of each of these three world-conquering movements, with their massive resources, is the replacement of Hinduism by their own ideology, or in effect: the destruction of Hinduism. This concern is not at all paranoid (as spokesmen of these aggressors would say), even if the conversion squads are remarkably unsuccessful in India.

Consider the situation in Africa: in 1900, 50% of all Africans practised Pagan religions; today, Christian and Islamic missionaries have reduced this number to less than 10%. That is the kind of threat Hinduism is up against. So far, the biggest success of these aggressors is at the level of thought:

many Hindus have interiorized the depreciation of Hindu culture and society which their enemies have been feeding them from the relative power positions which they have had in the past or are enjoying today. Standing up to the challenge thrown by these mortal enemies, Voice of India works for the intellectual mobilization of Hindu society.

The importance of Sitaram Goel's and Ram Swarup's work can hardly be over-estimated. There is no doubt that future textbooks on comparative religion as well as those on Indian political and intellectual history will devote crucial chapters to their analysis. They are the first to give a first-hand Pagan reply to the versions of history and "science of religion" imposed by the monotheist world-conquerors, both at the level of historical fact (e.g. Sitaram Goel's "History of Hindu-Christian Encounters") and of fundamental doctrine (e.g. Ram Swarup's "Hinduism vis-a-vis Christianity and Islam"), both in terms of the specific Hindu experience (e.g. Sitaram Goel's "Hindu Society under Siege") and of a more generalized theory of religion free from prophetic-monotheistic bias (e.g. Ram Swarup's "The Word as Revelation: Names of Gods", a ground-breaking statement of Pagan doctrine).

Their long-term intellectual importance is that they have contributed immensely to breaking the spell of all kinds of monotheist prejudices and misrepresentations of Paganism in general, Hinduism in particular. They have done so in an explicit manner, addressing the polemical positions taken by the world-conquerors squarely, not merely eulogizing the qualities of Upanishadic thought and other Hindu achievements (as too many Hindu revivalists do).

Voice of India's shorter-term political importance consists in its breaking through the weak apologetic taken by the established Hindu movement. This movement, including the Bharatiya Janata Party which won 24% of the vote in the 1991 elections, wastes quite a bit of its energy on proving its secular credentials and its harmlessness for Muslims and other minorities, unsuccessfully trying to acquire a new secular identity and meanwhile undermining its natural Hindu identity. It is still playing by the rules imposed by the Marxist-Muslim alliance. Voice of India changes the rules by debunking the premises of secularist discourse (very explicitly in Sitaram Goel's "Perversion of India's Political Parlance") and exposing the

imperialist designs which are currently stealing a march behind the
smokescreen of secularism.

3.2 INTELLECTUAL DEFENCE OF HINDUISM

Faced with the attack from the world-conquerors, Hindus have so far failed to put up an intelligent defence. This should already be clear from the extremely negative image of the Hindu revivalist movement which the English-language press has created, and against which this movement itself has been quite helpless. The organizations claiming to work for the welfare and defence of Hindu society, have not managed to give an intellectual dimension to their work, and have neglected the field of ideological development and of broadcasting their viewpoints through the media.

There is an India-wide Hindu organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, "National Volunteer Corps"), which is devoted to character-building, the physical training, to cultural activities, and to giving an organizational backbone to Hindu society. The erstwhile Jan Sangh and now the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are political parties affiliated with this RSS movement. The degree to which Hinduism is on the defensive can be inferred from the fact that these militant Hindu organizations do not even dare to call themselves Hindus, but go hiding behind neutral terms like "national" and "Indian".

The basic political ideology of the RSS is called integral humanism, developed by Deendayal Upadhyaya (d. 1967) on the basis of ancient Hindu social philosophy. The term means that the world should be organized in such a way that each of the four goals (purusharthas) of human life is given its due: Hindu tradition enumerates these as kama (erotics, pleasure), artha (gain, success), dharma (duty, world order), moksha (spiritual liberation). It is a humanism in the sense that human values, not divine revelation, form a basis of its programme (those who say that the BJP aims at creating a "Hindu theocratic state", merely display their ignorance). As an integralist Hindu alternative to the reductionist ideologies (socialism, liberalism, nationalism), integral humanism deserves comparison with Christian-democracy in Europe. In spite of all the swearwords hurled at the RSS/BJP, their ideology is quite unexceptionable. In fact, after the fall of Marxism, the renewed excess of nationalism, and the obvious limitations of liberalism

beyond the economic spheres, it is clear that humanity now needs an ideology which can only be some kind of "integral humanism".

While the ideological starting-point of these Hindu movements is perfectly acceptable, it is striking that there is no think-tank to develop this seed into a successful practical analysis of concrete political problems. Whereas Marxist have published numerous analyses about every social, political and cultural topic, the intellectual output of the RSS movement is minimal. Most of its pamphlets and manifestoes contain a lot of puffed-up patriotism and wailing over the Partition of the Hindu motherland, but little penetrating analysis that could be the basis for imaginative policies and a realistic strategy.

The intellectual failure of the Hindu movement is most striking in its dealing with the one great sore in medieval as well contemporary Hindu history: the Muslim problem. You hear so much about the Hindu-Muslim conflict, that you would expect to find a great deal of intellectual effort in analyzing the nature of this problem as a prerequisite to any workable solution. In fact, there is no such analysis by any leader of the organized Hindu movement, except in a very concise and elementary form, e.g. by prof. Balraj Madhok (erstwhile Jan Sangh leader who fell out with the party precisely because, apart from personal conflicts, he opposed its increasing opportunism and lack of Hindu consciousness). They all complain a lot that Muslim have destroyed temples and split the Motherland, that Muslims start riots, that Hindus are persecuted in Muslim states, but not one of them dares to ask why believers in Islam exhibit this unpleasant behaviour.

Most Hindu leaders expressly refuse to search Islamic doctrine for a reason for the observed fact of Muslim fanaticism. RSS leader Guru Golwalkar once said: "Islam is a great religion. Mohammed was a great prophet. But the Muslims are big fools." This is not logical, for the one thing that unites the (otherwise diverse) community of Muslims is their common belief in Islam: if any wrong is attributed to "the Muslims" as such, it must be situated in their common belief system.

In the Ayodhya dispute, time and again the BJP leaders have appealed to the Muslims to relinquish all claims to the supposed birthplace of the Hindu god Rama, arguing that destroying temples is against the tenets of Islam, and that the Quran prohibits the use of a mosque built on disputed land. In

fact, whatever Islam decrees against building mosques on disputed property, can only concern disputes within the Muslim community (or its temporary allies under a treaty). It is perfectly lawful, and established by the Prophet through his own example, to destroy Pagan establishments and replace them with mosques. But the BJP leaders dream of dealing with a tolerant Islam, and they appeal to the Muslims to remember the tolerance taught by Mohammed as much as by any other prophet. Perhaps this is the typically Hindu attitude which generously tries to see the best in every one; perhaps it is ignorance or cowardice or wilful self-deception; perhaps it is the psychological effect of centuries of terror, which make it hard for Hindus to even criticize their terrorizer. At any rate, the tolerant Islam of which the BJP leaders speak, does not exist.

Therefore, Sitaram Goel is rather critical of the current Ayodhya movement. In the foreword to the newly published second volume of his book "Hindu Temples, What Happened to Them", he writes: "The movement for the restoration of Hindu temples has got bogged down around the Rama Janmabhoomi at Ayodhya. The more important question, viz. why Hindu temples met the fate they did at the hands of Islamic invaders, has not been even whispered. Hindu leaders have endorsed the Muslim propagandists in proclaiming that Islam does not permit the construction of mosques at sites occupied earlier by other people's places of worship... The Islam of which Hindu leaders are talking exists neither in the Quran nor in the Sunnah of the Prophet. It is hoped that this volume will help in clearing the confusion. No movement which shuns or shies away from truth is likely to succeed. Strategies based on self- deception stand defeated at the very start."

Somewhat surprisingly, the established Hindu organizations show very little interest in Voice of India's work. Apparently they are mentally too slack to see the importance of fostering a developed Hindu viewpoint among their own activists. They prefer to invest in lots of physical locomotion, and to voice the prevalent self-pity concerning the injustice at the hands of the Muslims and the secularist state. What they should do instead, is to change the conceptual framework of Indian politics, and to re- educate their cadres and the public and free them from the mental grip of the perverted political parlance imposed by the Muslim-Marxist combine. That will do a lot more for overthrowing secularist depotism and India's vassalage to Islamic imperialism, than all the rathyatras and padyatras and kar sevas combined.

The ideological helplessness of political Hindus comes out immediately when you question them about Mahatma Gandhi. The assessment of Gandhi's significance for Hindu society, and the fact of his murder by a Hindu, are embarrassing topics with which Hindu-baiters are having a lot of fun. Invariably, they call the RSS (with its "family" of affiliated organizations including the BJP) the "murderers of the Mahatma". As Craig Baxter (in his 1971 book *Jana Sangh*) has remarked, this allegation is in defiance of the judicial verdict in the Mahatma murder trial. Nonetheless, Baxter notices that Gandhi's murder has been "a millstone around the neck" of the political Hindu movement and especially the RSS. It is true that the RSS had professed a very negative opinion of the Mahatma's failed policy of "Hindu-Muslim unity", which opinion was also Nathuram Godse's motive for the murder.

According to Balraj Madhok, the murder was "a very un-Hindu act" which saved the Mahatma from "the dustbin of history" to which he was heading after the creation of Pakistan crowned the victory of Islamic separatism over Gandhi's Hindu vision of trans-sectarian unity. There is truth in prof. Madhok's assessment, but only if we limit Gandhi's politics to his quest of "Hindu-Muslim unity". Voice of India is the only think-tank which has produced a straightforward, sincere and satisfactory analysis of Mahatma Gandhi's life and death from the Hindu viewpoint without reducing Gandhi's significance to his stand on a single issue.

As authentic Gandhians Ram Swarup (author of *Gandhian economics*) and Sitaram Goel can address the issue with an undisturbed conscience. They are aware of Gandhi's unconditional commitment to the well-being of Hindu society, and they have put Gandhi's defeat in the struggle against Partition in a proper perspective. The chapter on Mahatma Gandhi in Sitaram Goel's *Perversion of India's Political Parlance* should be required reading for anyone who tries to understand India's "communal problem". It is a powerful rebuttal both to Nathuram Godse's justification for the murder of the Mahatma, and to the numerous attempts to use the Mahatma as a secularist argument against the Hindu cause. Very briefly this is what it says.

First of all the Islamic and Communist lobbies who currently invoke the Mahatma's name to blacken Hinduism, had no use for the Mahatma while he was alive. They attacked him in the crassest language, thwarted his

policies and opposed him tooth and nail. On this issue as on many others, the secularist front displays the ugliest dishonesty. It was the Hindus who revered him, and if the Islamic-Communist combine consider the use of the Mahatma's name profitable, it is because the public mainly consists of Hindus who still revere or at least respect him.

The Mahatma's first and foremost loyalty was towards Hindu society. If he criticized it, it was for its own upliftment, to force it out of its inertia, rejuvenate and re-awaken it. He was a proud and combative Hindu.

The Mahatma's defence of Hinduism against the claim and allegations levelled by Christianity and by colonialism was very clear and unwavering. So was his opposition to the seeds of separatism which hostile forces tried to sow within Hindu society, via the Tamils, the Harijans, the Sikhs. In the Freedom struggle it was his strategy that managed to involve the masses. Unlike the Hindu Mahasabha, which championed religion but thought and worked in strictly political terms (borrowed from Western secular nationalism) the Mahatma understood that the Hindu masses could only be won over by a deeply religious appeal. The ethical dimension of politics which he emphasized, regained for Hinduism a good name throughout the world, and is still highly relevant (see Arun Shourie's book "Individuals Institutions Processes" for some practical lessons). Therefore, it is nothing short of morbid to remember the Mahatma only as the leader who failed to stop Islamic separatism, as Nathuram Godse did, and as a minority within the Hindu movement still does.

On the other hand, "it must be admitted that the failure which the Mahatma met vis-a-vis the Muslims was truly of startling proportions". It is a fact that his policy towards Muslims had always been one of appeasement at the cost of Hindu society. But nothing had helped and with every concession the Muslims continued to grow more hostile: "There must be something very hard in the heart of Islam that even a man of an oceanic goodwill like Mahatma Gandhi failed to move it".

The failure to prevent Partition can only be attributed to the Mahatma for the period (and to the extent) that he dictated Congress policy. The political course which had led to Partition, had been started before his arrival on the Indian scene. And when he was at the helm, most Congress leaders had equally approved of decisions which we can now recognize as steps on the

road to Partition. For instance, the 1916 Lucknow Pact between Congress and the Muslim League, which legitimized the privileges (separate electorates, one-third representation in the Central Assembly) that the League had obtained from the British, was signed by Lokamanya Tilak, an unquestionably staunch Hindu. The involvement in the khilafat movement, that giant boost for Muslim separatism, was accepted not only by the Nehrus, whose support for Islamic causes was always a foregone conclusion, but also by such Hindu stalwarts as Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

It is true that the Mahatma has made a number of sentimental and flatly untrue statements about Islam, such as: "Islam is a noble faith." He denied that the Quran preached intolerance, even when his multireligious prayer-sessions must have given him ample opportunity to inform himself of the numerous Quranic injunctions to, and expressions of, intolerance and hatred. But this stubborn blindness before the grim facts about Islam, which accords the aura of an avatar to Mohammed, the sancity of a Scripture to the Quran, etc. have been practised for a long time before the rise of the Mahatma, and are still being practised by a great many Hindus, including sadhus, intellectuals and politicians. Hinduism has always seen Islam through the eyes of its own spirituality, and projected its own qualities onto this radically different ideology.

The Mahatma had at least acknowledged the typical behaviour pattern of Islam ("In my experience the average Muslim is a bully, the average Hindu a coward"), so he was not a negationist. But he failed to trace Islamic fanaticism to its source, viz. the Quran and the example of the Prophet. Instead, he invented good-natured but fatally flawed explanations ("Islam is still a very young religion"), which ignored or denied the special character of Islam. The habit of explaining away the unpleasant facts about the Islam problem is still very much alive, even in circles dubbed as Hindu communalist and anti-Muslim.

The failure of the Mahatma before Islamic aggression was the failure of Hindu society. Sitaram Goel strongly rejects Nathuram Godse's allegation that the Mahatma was the chief culprit for the Partition: "It is highly doubtful if Hindu society would have been able to prevent Partition even if there had been no Mahatma Gandhi. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that Hindu society would have failed in any case."

Gandhi has propounded the following views which are in stark contrast with those of the Nehruvian establishment :

- India is one nation. It is not, as self-glorifying Britons and Nehruvians thought, "a nation in the making". It has a common culture called Sanatana Dharma ("eternal value system", Hindusim), and the adherence to this common heritage transcends the borders between language areas and other divisions which elsewhere would define a nation.
- Hinduism is in no way inferior to other religions and ideologies. On the contrary: "Whatever of substance is contained in any other religion is always to be found in Hinduism, and what is not contained in it is insubstantial or unnecessary."
- Political achievements like independence, national unity and social transformation can only be based on a religious and cultural awakening of Hindu society.

These are viewpoints which the political Hindu movement shares, and it should emphasize that secularism's claims on the Mahatma are entirely false. In the Indian context of sycophancy, it is important to have revered personalities on your side, and to quote their infallible statements. So, in the struggle for the Mahatma's heritage, the Nehruvian traitors to his message of Hindu self-confidence have invested a lot in misrepresenting the Mahatma as a *secularist*. But if Hindu society calls their bluff and honestly examines his work, it will expose the stark opposition between Gandhi and Nehru, between patriots and fellow-travellers, between practitioners of Hindu tolerance and bootlickers of Islamic imperialism. Hindus should claim the Mahatma back from those who call themselves Gandhians, but who kill the Mahatma a second time by emulating those very Hindu-baiters (e.g. the missionaries) who saw in the Mahatma their most dangerous opponent.

Sitaram Goel's conclusion puts the Mahatma in the centre of the Hindu revival: "The one lesson we learn from the Freedom movement as a whole is that a religious and cultural awakening in Hindu society has to precede political awakening. The language of Indian nationalism has to be the language of Sanatana Dharma before it can challenge and defeat the various languages of imperialism. The more clearly Hindu society sees the

universal truths of Hindu spirituality and culture, the more readily will it reject political ideologies masquerading as religion or promising a paradise on this earth. Mahatma Gandhi stands squarely with Maharshi Dayanand, Bankim Chandra, Swami Vivekananda, Lokamanya Tilak and Sri Aurobindo in developing the language of Indian nationalism. His mistake about Islam does not diminish the lustre of that language which he spoke with full faith and confidence. On the contrary, his mistake carries a message of its own."

The message present in the Mahatma's failure vis-a-vis Islam, is that Hindu society will only develop in peace and in dignity if it removes Islam. No amount of goodwill is capable of changing Islamic theology and its inherent political ambition of world conquest. But this is a conclusion from which the Hindu organizations are still shying away. It is quite unthinkable that one of their leaders would say: "Islam is a hostile and destructive ideology. We will not make any concession to it, and we work for its dissolution." Imagine the shrieks and howls in the secularists media in case of such a clear rejection of Islam's pretences, and you will understand why Hindu leaders shy away from it. But let then pause and think: is not braving the pandemonium of secularist indignation preferable to (self-) censoring the truth about Hindu society's mortal enemy?

The European humanists (deists as well as atheists) who attacked the power position of Christianity, were very clear about their objective: *Ecrasez l'Infame!* ("crush the infamous one" i.e. the Church). Many liberal and socialist parties were very outspoken in their rejection of the Christian religion, the opium of the masses (note that they were hardly aware that religion could be something better than the irrational belief systems of prophetic monotheism). Till today, the Communists are very unambiguous about their condemnation of all religion as an obscurantist superstition, and about their determination to ultimately liberate the people from the stranglehold of religion (unlike Hindu critics of Islam, the Communists understand removing a religion as a physical elimination of at least its ordained members, as they have amply proven on Buddhists in Mongolia,, Cambodia, etc. Even when anti- Christian socialists or liberals have entered coalitions with Christian-democrats, they never made it an occasion to renounce their fundamental rejection of Christianity. Even when Communists set up joint fronts for peace or against imperialism along with

Christian useful idiots (to use Lenin's term) they did not change their official line. So the Hindu movement would not do anything extraordinary if it states clearly that it rejects and condemns Islam as a mistaken belief system and a destructive ideology.

The RSS-BJP have been trying to be Muslim-friendly, and they are proud to tell you that they have some Muslims in their own ranks, even in leading positions. This makes it difficult for them to criticize Islam. A Muslim communalist leader has said that the presence of Muslims in any organization is always useful, as it effectively disarms that organization in the struggle against Islam. Even the most Hindu-friendly Muslims in the BJP is still a Trojan horse, not because he chooses to assume that role, but because his surroundings immediately change their language and behaviour one they meet a Muslim. It seems that no Hindu (especially with any political ambition in the Nehruvian framework) dares to criticize Islam in the presence of Muslims.

This is not to say that a Hindu-minded political party should refuse Muslims as members. On the contrary, it should definitely continue to prove that the Islamic establishment has no monopoly on the common Muslims' loyalty, and that many Alis and Fatimas refuse to be held on a leash by the Bukharis and Shahabuddins. However, it should not compromise on its Hindu perspective, and it should acknowledge that Islam is presently Hindu society's worst enemy. Perhaps it can use a more diplomatic language in passing judgement on Islam, but there should be no compromise about contents. After the ambiguity about the Hindu movement's opinion of Islam has been cleared, Muslim-born Indians should be attracted not with reassuring eulogies to the noble faith of Islam, but with a positive and non-sectarian programme of Integral Humanism, embodying the best of Hindu social philosophy without hammering too much on name-tags like Hindu. In the Gandhian perspective which Voice of India has been actualizing, Sanatana Dharma is not a banner, but a practical way of realizing the intrinsic goals of individual and society. Its central virtue is satya, truthfulness.

For Voice of India, as for Mahatma Gandhi, truth is as much an instrument as a goal: "In this fight for men's minds, our only weapon is Truth. Truth must be told, as much about Hindu society and culture as about the alien ideologies which have been on the war-path since the days of foreign

domination over the Hindu homeland." Political leaders who claim the confidence of Hindu society would do well to take some inspiration from this, and to rethink their ambiguous attitude regarding Islam. Not facing the truth about Islam was a costly mistake in Gandhi's time. With Islam's increasing strength and self-confidence, it may prove to be a deadly mistake in the near future.

3.3 WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HINDU TEMPLES ?

In all the lands it conquered, Islam has replaced indigenous places of worship mosques. In Iran, there are no ancient Zoroastrian or Manichean shrines left. In Central Asia, there are no Buddhist temples left. Similarly, in India (except the far South where Islam hardly penetrated) there are practically no Hindu temples that have survived the Muslim period. But there are thousands of mosques built on the foundations of Hindu temples, often with the debris of those very temples. These archaeological remains are mute witnesses to the long and repetitive story of Islamic iconoclasm.

The first volume of the "Hindu Temples" book subtitled "A Preliminary Survey", was published in the spring of 1990 and played an important role in the political debate over the controversial Rama temple in Ayodhya. It contains a competently presented list of about 2000 mosques in India that have forcibly replaced Hindu temples. This list is not complete, and does not concern Pakistan and other countries where temples have been violently replaced with mosques. Moreover, the number of temples of which material has been used in these 2000 mosques far exceeds 2000. For the single Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi, as an inscription at the entrance proudly proclaims 27 Hindu temples had been destroyed. These 2000 are only the tip of an iceberg.

This first volume also contains a list of over 200 temples destroyed in Bangladesh in November 1989 under pretext of protest against the Shilanyas (laying of the first stone) ceremony of the prospective Rama temple in Ayodhya. Muslims have raised a hue and cry over the demolition of the Babri Masjid (which they had not used since decades), but few outsiders seem to realize that destruction of the religious places of minorities is a routine affair in Islamic states.

The book also contains articles by Ram Swarup, Jay Dubashi, Prof. Harsh Narain, and the famous journalist Arun Shourie. Ram Swarup, like editor Sitaram Goel, traces the facts of Islamic intolerance and iconoclasm to the exclusivist theology of the Quran and the Sunnah (tradition). He also deals with the role of Marxism in recent negationist efforts: "Marxists have taken to rewriting Indian history on a large scale and it has meant its systematic

falsification... The Marxists' contempt for India, particularly the India of religion, culture and philosophy, is deep and theoretically fortified. It exceeds the contempt ever shown by the most die-hard imperialists... Marx ruled out self-rule for India altogether and in this matter gave her no choice... Marxism idealizes old imperialisms and prepares a people for a new one. Its moving power is deep-rooted self-alienation and its greatest ally is cultural and spiritual illiteracy... No true history of India is possible without countering their philosophy, ideas and influence."

Jay Dubashi, an economist affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party, links the laying of the first stone for the planned Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya with the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, which happened on the very same day: "While a temple was going up in Ayodhya, a Communist temple was being demolished 5,000 miles away in Europe... The two events...mark the end of the post-Nehru era and the beginning of a truly national era in India on the one hand, and the...beginning of a truly democratic era in Europe on the other. History has rejected Nehru in India and also overthrown Communism in Europe." Reductionist systems which see man only as producer or consumer of material goods, are out. The mental horizon clears up and prepares for the era of an integral humanism continuous with the age-old spiritual vision of Sanatana Dharma.

Harsh Narain, a historian who has taught at both Aligarh Muslim University and Benaras Hindu University, presents four pieces of testimony for the local tradition that the Babri Masjid had replaced a Rama Temple, all written in the 19th century by local Muslims outside the sphere of British influence. One of these testimonies narrowly escaped oblivion: it was part of a manuscript that was recently published as a book by a Muslim foundation, which decided to omit the chapter containing the inconvenient testimony. Fortunately, a descendant of the author had the controversial chapter published separately.

A similar story is told in greater detail by Arun Shourie (sacked in 1990 as Indian Express editor after exposing V.P.Singh's deal with secularists like imam Bukhari) about yet another piece of Muslim testimony for the pre-existence of a Rama temple at the Babri Masjid site. A book mentioning this tradition had been published in tempore non suspecto, but recently efforts had been made to get back all the copies from places where unbelievers might get access to it.

None of the negationist historians, and none of the so-called secularists at large, has spent one word of comment on these attempts to tamper with the historical Ayodhya record. They condone anything that may weaken the Hindu case in the Ayodhya debate. Whatever the mistakes committed by the Hindu Ayodhya movement on the ground, at the intellectual level it is a struggle for truth and honesty, against attempts (some petty, some high-handed) to falsify history. On the other hand, the stand taken by leading negationist historians in this debate will be studied in the future as a classic in latter-day Marxist history falsification.

In November 1990 there had been proposals in the national parliament and in the state parliament of Uttar Pradesh to ban this first volume of "Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them". This step was not taken, possibly because negationists thought the ban would be counter productive by drawing attention to the list of disputable mosques. None of the negationist historians has come forward with a reply or with the announcement that a mistake has been discovered in Mr. Goel's list of monuments of Islamic fanaticism. Manini Chatterjee, reviewer for The Telegraph, could do no more than calling it a "very bad book". Very bad for the negationists, indeed.

The second volume of Sitaram Goel's book, subtitled "The Islamic Evidence", and published in May 1991, takes us a lot farther in its revelations of the grim facts of the Islamic campaign to destroy Hinduism. It also contains some head-on attacks on negationism. By way of introduction, it deals in great detail with the controversies over Krishna's birthplace temple in Mathura and the Rudramahalaya temple complex in Sidhpur, both forcibly replaced with Islamic structures and exposed the negationists' machinations to distort or conceal the facts. The chapter From the Horse's Mouth gives 174 pages full of quotations from Muslim documents that describe and glorify the destruction of Hindu temples very explicitly. It is only an anthology, and the already very impressive material collected in this chapter is again only the tip of an iceberg.

If this book gets the publicity it deserves, negationist historians will find it difficult to show their faces in public. They stand exposed, and only their control over the media can save their reputation by censoring this critique of their career-long efforts at history falsification.

In appendix, the book contains a questionnaire for the negationist historians concerning their second front: allegations that Hinduism has demolished or stolen many Buddhist and "Animist" shrines. As we have seen in ch.2.7., the negationists go on spreading the story that the Hindu had persecuted and destroyed Buddhism. Now, Sitaram Goel challenges the negationist historians to come forward and present, among other things:

- a list of Hindu temples that have forcibly replaced Buddhist (or Jain or animist) temples;
- a list of epigraphs recording such temple destructions;
- a list of literary sources describing these temple destructions;
- a list of injunctions to, and glorifications of, the destruction of non-Hindu temples in Hindu scriptures;
- a list of known historical Buddhist (Jain, animist) temples which are now missing due to Hindu iconoclasm.

Of course, the negationist historians have not reacted so far. Perhaps the reply has already been given implicitly in their earlier publications? As we have seen in ch.2.7., the negationist books and articles in which this allegation against Hinduism is made, try but fail to give the answers to Mr. Goel's questions, viz. the evidence required to substantiate the allegation. It may be hard to believe for followers of iconoclastic religions and ideologies, but non-fanatical religions do exist, and some of them have co-existed for millennia with only marginal moments of friction.

3.4 FACE TO FACE WITH MOHAMMED'S MODEL BEHAVIOUR

The most important part of the second volume is the 145- page chapter about the Islamic theology of iconoclasm (i.e. the destruction of what other people consider sacred objects or buildings). Here, the spotlight is moved from India to Arabia. The Islamic destructions in India were nothing but a long-drawn-out reply of Prophet Mohammed's own exemplary practice, which in turn is only an application of Quranic injunctions.

One of the great founding-moments of Islam was the capturing of the Kaaba, the sanctuary in Mecca. With their own hands, Mohammed and his son-in-law Ali smashed to pieces all 360 idols. After that, Mohammed sent patrols to all the population centres of Arabia to smash the idols and to destroy or convert the temples (mostly polytheist but also including a Christian church). Since the Quran and the Prophet's model behaviour count as normative, we must recognize that the desecration and destruction of other people's sanctuaries is an intrinsic component of Islam, not a later accidental outgrowth.

The Dome on the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque have also been built on a sacred place stolen from others: the Jewish Temple Mount. True, under Byzantine rule the Jews could not rebuild their Temple, but still the site remained most sacred to them. Nonetheless (or rather, precisely for the reason), Mohammed's successors took it from them, in order to affirm Mohammed's claim to being the final fulfilment of the Abrahamic prophetic tradition. Similarly the cathedral of Damascus, of Cordova (both cathedrals had themselves replaced Pagan temples) and of many other places were taken from the Christians, as would also happen 8 centuries later to the Aya Sophia of Constantinople. The take-over of these Jewish and Christian places of worship should moreover be seen against the background of the relative tolerance which these two communities still enjoyed under Islamic rule: if this tolerance could not prevent the take-over of important places of worship, how much less chance did a Pagan temple have.

In parenthesis, we should draw attention to the flimsy rationalizations which Islam has produced to justify the occupation of the most sacred places of other religions. In the Ayodhya conflict, the Muslim side has often

said that the Hindus must first produce proof that Rama was indeed born on the spot which Hindus claim as his birthsite. If historical proof is the prerequisite before a sacred site can be recognized and accorded respect, then Muslims will have to give up both the Kaaba and the Temple Mount. Of the Kaaba, which Mohammed took from the Arab Pagans, they claim that it was built by Adam and rebuilt by Abraham (facts suppressed in the Old Testament by a Jewish conspiracy to distort God's word), and later stolen by the Pagans. Of the Temple Mount, which they took from the Jews in order to affirm Mohammed's status as the seal of the lineage of Jewish prophets, they claim that it was Mohammed's landing-site in his night journey through heaven on a winged horse. These ridiculous claims can hardly be considered as historically proven.

Sitaram Goel analyzes the relation between the Prophet and the unbelievers. As a Hindu, i.e. as a Pagan, he is especially interested in the viewpoint of the Arab polytheists. That is one thing which makes this book a milestone in the science of religion. Until now, the study of Islam has been either a part of Christian apologetics, which applauded Mohammed's destruction of idolatry even while denouncing his claims of prophethood as imposture; or it was part of the recent effort to create a "better understanding" of Islam, which in effect tends to mean the apriori suppression of all criticism of Mohammed as being mere prejudice. Here, a Pagan stands up to reconstruct the Pagan viewpoint.

That it is a Hindu who should direct our attention to the viewpoint of the Arab Pagans, is normal. Hinduism is almost the only polytheist culture to survive till today, and the attitude of the Muslims towards Arab and Indian Pagans was essentially the same. In pre-Islamic days, there were not only intense trade contacts between Indian and Arab Pagans, but also a kind of pilgrimage exchange. The Hindus visiting Arabia paid their respects to the Arab sanctuaries, and considered the black stone in the Kaaba as a shivalingam, a phallus of Shiva (as Western orientalists translate it). The Arabs, in turn, went to pray in the Somnath temple in Gujrat. The Muslims believed that the idols of the Pagan goddesses Al-Lat and Manat (of Satanic Verses fame) had been transferred to Somnath, and this is one reason why Mahmud Ghaznavi and other Muslims risked their lives in conducting raids deep into Hindu territory in order to destroy the Somnath temple.

Within the framework of the current unprejudiced approach to Islam, multiculturalist do-gooders copy all the Islamic accusations against the Pagans, a party which isn't there anymore to give its own version of the facts. They say that Paganism no longer satisfied the Arabs, so that they welcomed Islam; that the Prophet identified with the poor and was welcomed by them as a liberator from the oppressive Pagan elite; that the Muslims were the victims of persecution by Pagan fanatics, so that their fight against the Pagans was merely defensive; that the position of women in Islam "may not be ideal, but at least a great step forwards compared to the pre-Islamic period"; that the Pagans only opposed Mohammed because they feared for their unrighteous power positions and for the dishonest income from the superstitious pilgrimage to the Kaaba idols. Similar things have been said by the negationists about the advent of Islam in India, demonstrably wrongly.

In numerous European works on Islam, the Islamic negative judgement on the Arab Pagans is adopted lock, stock and barrel. Only Mohammed's relation with Jews and Christians comes in for a bit of polite criticism. Of course, if on some occasions Mohammed was tolerant towards Jews and Christians, it was because he had borrowed from them the monotheism which he wanted to impose on his own people, and because he had expected them to recognize him, in due course, as a Prophet of their own tradition. For the Pagans there was no mercy at all (except in one promising moment of weakness, the so-called Satanic Verses in which he accorded a measure of respect to three Pagan goddesses). Those who like to fight against intercultural prejudices and misconceptions, should accord posthumous restoration of honour to the destroyed culture of the Arab Pagans, whose own testimony has been obliterated though it can be glimpsed indirectly through some passages in Islamic Scripture. Serious historiography would start by noticing that the Islamic reports on the Pagans are the highly coloured version of their mortal enemy.

The Islamic statements about the unbelievers, in the original Hadis as well as (in fact, even more strongly) in modern apologetics, serve a similar purpose as the anti-Semitic Nazi film *The dirty Jew Suss*, or the forged *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. They serve to justify the annihilation of a religion and the subjection of a nation (Mohammed conceived of his community as a nation). While the core of the Islamic version of Islam's

early history is of course historical,, there is no doubt that,, on top of the highly partisan viewpoint expressed in the Quran,, a lot of motivated distortion has crept in during the two centuries between the facts and the edition of the Hadis.

For instance, the contention made in the Hadith that the Muslims in Mecca (before Mohammed set up his state in Medina) were subjected to persecution, is not borne out by the more reliable information in the Quran (finalized a few years after Mohammed's death). The Quran gives a lot of details about the Pagans' reaction to Mohammed's performance, what questions and arguments they confronted him with; but persecution does not figure in it. Any hints at confrontation date from the time when Mohammed, already established as the leader of Medina, had launched his caravan raids and finally his open warfare against the Meccans and other unbelievers.

Even the Islamic traditions leave us in no doubt as to who was the aggressor. In Ibn Ishaq's orthodox biography of Mohammed, we read that the first blood in Islamic history flowed when a Meccan happened to witness the prayer-session of the new sect, laughed, and got beaten up (the very act of laughing is still frowned upon in Islamic theology). One fine day, Mohammed announced to the Meccans in the Kaaba: "By the One Who holds my life in His hand, I bring you slaughter." Without provocation, he and his comrades used to disturb the Pagan festivals and insult the Meccan religion.

The Pagans were definitely not intolerant: they allowed Christians and Jews to live amongst them, in spite of the persecutions by Jewish and Christian leaders only a few decades earlier. It was Mohammed who rejected any "live and let live" agreement, most explicitly when this proposal was made to him around his uncle Abu Talib's deathbed. The simpletons who claim that the Quranic verse: "To you your religion, to me my religion" (Q.109:6), is a statement of tolerance, should know that this is literally the proposal made to him around Abu Talib's deathbed by the Arab Pagans, and that he turned it down, demanding that they embrace Islam, nothing less. The Quranic verse simply means: I will have nothing to do with you, there is no compromise possible between your religion and mine. The Indian secularists who have dreamed up the notion of composite culture uniting Islamic and native Indian elements, should remember that

according to every Muslim who stands by the Quran, such synthesis of Islamic and non-Islamic elements is impermissible and a watered-down act of apostasy.

Mohammed did not tolerate the Meccans' rejection of his claim to prophethood, and threatened all non-believers in his claim with hellfire. If the civilized and tolerant Meccans didn't tolerate his intolerant rantings forever, it is quite understandable; but still their patience was a lot bigger than Islamic apologetics wants us to believe. It is only logical for a religion which preaches war, to develop a cult of martyrdom (unknown in Buddhism and Taoism, among others); the Hadis traditionists have blamed the whole conflict on the destroyed Pagan society of Mecca, and attributed a touch of heroic martyrology to the early Muslims. But the fact that it is the Pagan and not the Muslim version which has been obliterated, is a strong clue to who was aggressor and who was victim.

Sitaram Goel is one of the first historians to keep the proper distance from the partisan Muslim version. He summarizes what we may know objectively about the Pagan culture and the complexities of its religion, through inscriptions, pre-Islamic literary documents (Greek, Roman, Mesopotamian), and indirectly through Islamic scripture. They had a pantheon comparable to that of the ancient Greeks or Hindus, embodying metaphysical, cosmological and ethical notions. On this basis Mr. Goel rejects the now-classical description of the Arab-Pagans as "quarelling rabble addicted to idol-worship", and concludes: "It is nothing short of slanderous to say that pre-Islamic Arabs were barbarians devoid of religion and culture, unless we mean by religion and culture what the Muslim theologians mean."

The Arab Pagans have only made the mistake of being defeated, but "the fact that they failed to understand the ways of Mohammed and could not match his mailed fist in the final round, should not be held against them. It was neither the first nor the last time that a democratic society succumbed in the face of determined gangsterism. We know how Lenin, Hitler and Mao Tse-tung succeeded in our own times."

A modern myth spread by Islamic apologists and especially by Western friends of Islam, is that the Meccans did not really care for their religion, and only opposed Mohammed because of financial calculations concerning

the revenue of the annual pilgrimage to the Kaaba. For instance, in the introduction to Prof. J.H. Kramers's Dutch translation of the Quran, we read: "In Mohammed's time the religious aspect of the Haji festival had been lost, it had become a big market, more fit for doing business than for devotion to the gods... The Arab religion was a primitive polytheism, poor in real religiosity..."

However, it is a fact that the Meccans' revenue increased immensely after the Kaaba had been transformed into an Islamic place of pilgrimage, and after the entry into the Muslim fold gave them the right to share in the booty of raids and conquests: they gained enormously by converting, at least politically and materially. More pertinent for the historian is the fact that the Islamic sources themselves don't bother about attributing such materialistic motives to the Meccans, and merely hold it against them that they are idolaters and refuse to recognize Mohammed's prophethood. At most, accusations of injustice and hoarding riches are added to blacken them, but the object of the Islamic campaign against them is not to change their socio-economic life (although this would inevitably be influenced by the endless inflow of booty and later by the imperial size and structure of the Islamic state), but to change the religion.

The crude allegation of materialistic motives can be turned around against Mohammed, on firmer grounds. The Meccans were traders, and maybe some were even usurers, as modern apologetics claims. But Mohammed was worse: he organized 80 raids on peaceful caravans, and led 26 of them in person. He had Allah reveal that booty from raids on Pagans and conquest of Pagan lands was lawful (Q.8.69), and that one-fifth of the booty (including slaves) was the Prophet's own. If no fighting had occurred, all of the booty belonged to Allah and His Prophet.

In the classic of Marxist negationism, *Communalism in Modern India*, Prof. Bipan Chandra describes how "Hindu communalists" spread the myth of the inherently intolerant character of Islam, and quotes as prime example the Hindu Mahasabha leader Swatantryaveer Savarkar, who wrote in 1923: "Religion is a mighty motive force. So is rapine. But where religion is goaded on by rapine and rapine serves as a handmaid to religion, the propelling force that is generated by these together is only equalled by the profundity of human misery and devastation they leave behind them in their march. Heaven and Hell making a common case - such were the forces,

overwhelmingly furious, that took India by surprise the day that Mahmud Ghaznavi crossed the Indus and invaded her." Of course, Bipan Chandra doesn't even attempt to argue against the contents of this statement, he takes it as axioma that such views are nothing but inventions of a communalist false consciousness.

Whatever we may think of Savarkar's poolitical views, his brief analysis of the nature and impact of islam is impeccable. It is not only borne out by the career of Islam in India, but also in detail, by the Quran and Hadith. They have no room for doubt about Mohammed's own unhesitating initiative in linking religion with rapine.

To justify his share of the booty, Mohammed decreed that his own revenue, both from booty and from the charity tax (zakat) which all Muslims had to pay, was to be used for charity. Here we have another item from the apologist's tool kit: the notion that Mohammed brought the practice of charity to the selfish and greedy Pagans. In fact, the zakat was originally a Pagan practice on an individual basis, which was nationalized by Mohammed's Islamic state. As for its caritative purposes: the Hadith collections tell us more about the Islamic revenue being used to buy arms and horses, for new and bigger raids, than aboout charity in the usual sense. In fact, the Quranic decree (9.60) that this income be used in the service of Allah and "for winning over the hearts [to Islam]", means in plain language: for the Holy War, and as a material incentive for loyalty to Islam. So, all the resources which became available to the Muslim state through whatever means, were to be used to strengthen and expand this state; charity to keep the poor happy was one element in this policy, but really a minor one. The end justified the means, and war coffers of Medina as well as the enthusiasm of the Islamic soldiers were replenished with a constant infolow of booty. Those who perforce want to reduce the conflict between Pagans and Muslims to case of crude greed, had better throw the stone in Mohammed's direction.

The real reason why the Meccans rejected Mohammed's prophecies, can be inferred very clearly from the Quran. It was not for any materialistic reason, because at that time especially after the creation of the first Islamic state in Medina, joining Mohammed was the short road to wealth and slave-ownership. The real reasons, which the Meccans themselves formulated in discussion with Mohammed, were the following.

Firstly, they were attached to their ancestral religion. This is not stupid obscurantism, but a very sensible consequence of the basic premise that religion is concerned with eternal truths. Give me that old-time religion: it was good for my ancestors, it is good enough for me. The Meccans felt a sincere disgust when Mohammed consigned their ancestors, including his own mother to the fire of hell because of their having lived in the pre-Mohammedan "era of ignorance" (jahiliya). The split of history into hell-bound people who had not been followers of Mohammed, and heaven-bound Mohammedans, was just too puerile (and egocentric on Mohammed's part) to be taken serious by a grown-up human beings.

Secondly, the Meccans made a clear diagnosis of someone who hears voices and thinks he is God's own spokesman. A number of times of Quran dictates what Mohammed has to answer when the Pagans say he is possessed. In modern terminology, the Pagans thought he was mentally deranged. That is not a prejudice from medieval polemics Islam, but the perception of numerous contemporary eye-witnesses. Moreover, the orthodox biography and the traditions also give some involuntary indications for a neuro-mental disorder: as a child Mohammed had been thrown on the ground general times (by God), to the worry of his guardians; when receiving revelations he became all chilly and foamed at the mouth; his first revelations frightened him intensely and he himself wondered whether he was becoming crazy (the soothing impact of habit and of his compassionate wife Khadija re-assured him). The Meccans' inference that Mohammed was merely hallucinating, whether correct or not, was at any rate not far-fetched, nor necessarily dishonest.

When the most authentic sources keep on saying that the Meccans opposed Mohammed because they didn't believe him and because they refused to give up their time-tested religion for the railings of a mad poet, it is methodologically quite indefensible to ignore this and to replace it with the gratuitous contention that they defended their religion only out of false materialistic motives. Imagine being in the same situation as the Meccans: someone walks into your house uninvitedly and telly you that he has a private telephone line with God that he is the last one to enjoy this privilege, that he cn intercede for you on Judgement Day, that you have to smash to pieces what you cherish most, and that you will burn forever in

hell if you don't believe him. Would you need any base motives to show him the door?

3.5 THE NATURE OF ISLAM

While Mohammed enthusiastically assumed his role of God's spokesman because of a peculiar psychological condition, the theology which he espoused and which was developed in detail by later generations of Muslims clerics, was largely a continuation of the older monotheism of the Jews and Christians. From them, Mohammed had picked up a number of Bible stories and theological notions including prophethood. A large part of the Old Testament is devoted to the struggle against polytheism and idolatry. Moses ordered the sternest measures against these alternatives to his own cult of Yahweh, and successive prophets would employ the foulest language and sometimes the most treacherous means to annihilate god-pluralism.

In advanced Christian apologetics, the struggle between the One God and the many gods is portrayed as a struggle between the proper religious veneration of the Divine and the false religious treatment of non-religious objects like money, status, enjoyment, power and other worldly things. But that is not at all what the prophets' fierce and sometimes bloody struggle against idol-worship was about. The two contenders were not ethically different, and among the Ten Commandments, only the first and second (no other gods, no images of sentient beings) were a point of difference between Pagans and monotheists. They were not the violent vs. the peaceful, or the lewd vs. the chaste (in the prophets' tirades, fornication means idolatry) or the good vs. the bad, or the religious vs. the irreligious. The Pagans had a culture, a code of ethics, a religion complete with rituals, festivals mystical practices and doctrines; at best, the monotheists had the same things, but under the aegis of a different God, the jealous and vindictive Yahweh/Allah. What Moses could not tolerate about the Golden Calf, was not that it was made of gold (as modern moralistic Christians think), for it was only natural that people wanted to sacrifice some of their riches to glorify what they consider most sacred, viz. the god they worship. The Horned god worshipped by the Pagans in Moses' following was not intolerable because his statue was made of gold, but because he was an alternative to Yahweh.

In his chapter on the doctrine of iconoclasm, Sitaram Goel traces this doctrine to its Old Testament sources, and lists all the instances of verbal

and physical violence against idolatry. This story might make defenders of Islam say: "See whatever you say about Islam, Judaism and Christianity aren't any better." That is true if you consider an earlier stage of the Jewish and Christian religions. But it is a hopeful sign that these two religions have come a long way since the arch-fanatic Moses. The Jews have not had a state for many centuries, and they have developed a social outlook of live and let live. They never had a doctrine of world conquest anyway, and had limited their ambition to the Promised Land. In present-day Israel, the Jewish authorities respect and protect the religious rights and pilgrimage places of Christians, Muslims and Bahais. Judaism is one religion that has actually grown, matured over the centuries. For Christianity, the days of persecuting Pagans and heretics are not that far behind us yet and more civilized forms of fanaticism are still there. But at least the principle of religious freedom has been conceded by the Second Vatican Council, and the effort to enter a dialogue with other religions is not entirely an eyewash.

The last few centuries, a strong humanization has taken place within Christianity. For instance, after condoning the institution of slavery of about 18 centuries, Christians have abolished slavery in their domains. The motive was not outside pressure alone, but also ethical considerations developed by Christian clerics and thinkers since the Renaissance. As the case of William Wilberforce shows, abolition of slavery could even go hand in hand with Christian fanaticism. By contrast Islamic countries have only abolished slavery under pressure from Western culture. Even after that, slavery has continued to be practised occasionally in countries like Sudan and Mauritania.

The Islamic doctrine of slavery was closely linked with its doctrine of the inescapable struggle between believers and unbelievers: a Pagan could not own a Muslim slave, but a Muslim could of course own a Pagan slave, and Pagans were routinely sold into slavery if they had the misfortune of being captured by Muslims. Wherefrom the European folklore character of Saint Nicolas' associate, the Moor Black Pete, who puts naughty children in his bag to carry them off and beat them with his rod. And wherefrom the Afrikaans (South African) word kaffer, negro, originally black slave, from Arabic kafir, Pagan. In contemporary Islamic apologetics for African and Black American consumption, Islam is portrayed as anti-slavery. That is yet another instance of negationism.

Another example of the difference between Islam and Christianity is the fact that among the Christian missionaries who accompanied the Conquistadores in the New World, there were some who expressed pity and regret when they described the sad plight of the native Americans. There were some who tried to save the natives' lives and freedom (though not their religion). In the numerous chronicles of the Muslim conquests and rule in India, there are to my knowledge no such considerations. At least a germ of a universal ethics and a universal human fellow-feeling, transcending the frontiers between religious communities, was present in Christianity, even if for a very long time it was obscured by monotheistic and ecclesiastic exclusivism ("outside the Church no salvation"). In Islam, this glimpse of universalism is confined to a few of the early heterodox Sufis, who were considered heretics by authoritative guardians of Islam. At any rate, their works are only read by a few intellectual amateurs, but the official doctrines are hammered into children's minds in Islamic schools the world over. An occasional tolerant Muslim does not have the power to overrule and abrogate the Quran. Not one Islamic school in the world teaches that Allah's declarations of war on the unbelievers stand abrogated. The cleavage of humanity into Muslims and non-Muslims is so fundamental of Islamic doctrine, that it is very hard to even imagine the transformation of Islam into a tolerant religion.

Christianity has a broader basis than just the Moses line of intolerant monotheism, it has incorporated elements from Pagan sources such as Greek philosophy, and so it can disown some parts of its history without having to disown its very identity and dissolve itself. Judaism has developed a pluralist culture of debate and interpretation, embodied in the Talmud, which makes it temperamentally averse to the fanaticism characteristic of the world-conquering religions. But Islam is bound up very closely with the text of the Quran and the personality of Mohammed. It cannot disown these without dissolving itself. Islam is by its own description a "seamless garment": pull out one thread and the whole fabric comes apart. Since fanaticism and persecution of non-Muslims are an intrinsic and strongly emphasized teaching of the Quran, there is no hope of witnessing the emergence of a genuinely tolerant Islam.

Sitaram Goel's sharp criticism of Islam can in no way be explained as an expression of anti-Arab racism (which would be the standard reply to such

criticism in Europe). First of all, equating Islam criticism with anti-Arab racism is a typically eurocentric allegation, because outside Europe the opposition between Muslim and non-Muslim seldom has a racial dimension. Moreover, Islam (and more generally monotheism) had been a foreign and eccentric fad to the Arabs, and was forcibly imposed on them by Mohammed. As Sitaram Goel explains, the Arabs were the first to be robbed of their culture by Islam. Like the Persians, Egyptians and many others after them, they were robbed of their history, which was condemned as an age of darkness and replaced by a fake ancestry involving Ismael and Abraham.

Even the large-scale crimes against humanity which the Arabs were to commit during the Islamic Blitzkrieg under Mohammed and his immediate successors, should not be held against the Arabs, but against Islam: "Nor should the image of what the Arabs became after they were forced into the fold of Islam be confused with what they were before... For it was Islam which brutalized the Arabs and turned them into bloodthirsty bandits who spread fire and sword, far and wide. In the majority of mankind, the baser drives of human nature are never far from the threshold. Islam brought them to the fore in the case of the majority of Arabs." Criticizing Islam is not an attack on nations or individuals, but it is an ideological critique, as well as a psychological critique of what is called prophethood. Instead of accusing "the Muslims" of the numerous crimes which their community has undeniably committed, this critique absolves many Muslim-born individuals of this guilt, by placing it squarely where it belongs: in the doctrine of Islam as the ideological motivation for these acts of fanaticism.

In Europe there is no Voltaire anymore who would dare to give one of his works the title "Mahomet ou le fanatisme" ("Mohammed or fanaticism", a play criticizing religious fanaticism, showing Mohammed murdering one of his critics). Even the Rushdie affair has not sent European intellectuals searching Islamic Scripture and informing the public that Mohammed himself had ordered the murder of poets who had criticized him, thus setting the example for Khomeini's "death sentence" on Rushdie. There is no Schopenhauer anymore who dares to speak openly of the contrast between the humane philosophies of South and East Asia and the barbaric fanaticism taught and practised by Mohammed.

European intellectuals observe a taboo on criticism of Islam. I am sure this is only temporary, but at least it is definitely the case today. This criticism of Islam, making use of all the methodological process which the science of history has made in the West, must now apparently be done in India. A powerful lead in this endeavour has been given by Sitaram Goel.

After debunking the pious claims which Islamic apologists, Indian "secularists" and Western "multiculturalists" (who do not realize that Islam has systematically destroyed pluralist cultures and is the very antithesis of multicultural co-existence) are making for Islam, intellectuals should prepare for the next important task: helping the Muslim masses on their way into a humanist world culture, i.e. out of the mental and social shackles of Islam. We have to educate the Muslim masses on their way into a humanist world culture, i.e. out of the mental and social shackles of Islam. We have to educate the Muslim masses, and frankly make them aware of the choice they have: staying in or opting out of a religion of backwardness and fanaticism. We should not have the field of information about Islam to the obscurantist mullahs and the negationist history-falsifiers. This is more than a propaganda task, because it involves understanding the universal values which common Muslims identify with Islam, and preserving them while eliminating the distinctive exclusivism and fanaticism of Islam.

Islam is not an inborn quality of a community of people, which has to be accepted as an unchangeable element which we have to learn to live with. The Muslims are just human beings, descendants of people who were mostly converted to Islam under pressure (ranging from material incentives to a choice at swordpoint), and there is no reason to believe that they are immune to the influence of rational thought and humanist culture. But straightforward criticism of Islam is likely to infuriate the Islamic clerics and many common Muslims. A lot of intelligence will be needed to dissolve the mental grip of Islam in a gentle way.

The easy part is to be honest with ourselves, and stop these attempts to paint Islam in rosy colours. It is the duty of all those who come in contact with negationism, to expose this intellectual crime. We need not pin people down on the appalling record of the religion they were born into, and we may forgive everything, but wrongdoings can only be forgiven once they are recognized as such. Therefore, there is no virtue in concealing and denying

the crimes against humanity which Islam has committed systematically in India and elsewhere. For social harmony, it is far better to face the truth.

Of course, ultimately it is for the Muslims themselves to see the shortcomings of their religion, and revise it suitably so that it permits them to live at peace with non- Muslims. No critique of Islam from the outside can be a substitute for a critique from within the Muslim fold. But so long as Muslims are held down by despotic theocracies or frightened by fierce fundamentalism, and cannot speak freely, people from the outside have to speak freely, people from the outside have to speak for them. The history of how Christian theocracy and Communist totalitarianism got shaken in the long run, shows the way. In both cases, it was a critique from the outside which proved a powerful catalytic agent. Voices of reason and humanism have a way of penetrating the thickest theological walls and the strongest iron curtains.

In this context, Hindus are in a unique position. They have been victims of Islamic imperialism and intolerance for more than thirteen centuries. They know it in their bones what Islam has done to their ancient homeland, their society, their culture, and what it has so far stood for. They have only to stop complaining about the Muslim behaviour pattern, and trace that pattern to its source in the Islamic scripture: then they will acquire an initiative which they have never had in their long encounter with Islam. Once they educate themselves about the true character of Islam, they will be in a position to educate their Muslim countrymen, on most of whom Islam sits rather lightly. It need not be a campaign for Shuddhi, it has to be only a battle for liberating Muslims from the stranglehold of a closed creed.

CHAPTER FOUR - REPLY TO SOME QUESTIONS AND CRITICISMS

After the publication of first edition of this book, and of articles containing some of its ideas, I have received some comments to which I will reply here.

4.1 BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY

"You have been too much influenced by these Hindus among whom you lived in Benares and Delhi. You haven't heard the other side of the story."

"The other side of the story" is not at all unknown to me: it has been the object of my rather lengthy criticism all through this essay. It is the people who have been taken in by the rosy picture of Islam, who know only one side of the story. When they get to hear this side as well, it turns out that they just don't want to hear it. After all, the prospect of having to deal with an increasingly numerous and increasingly aggressive community under the spell of Islam is a bit frightening. We would all prefer to live in a world without the threat of Islamic fanaticism, but we should not delude ourselves that we are already living in such a tolerant and danger-free world.

Have I started seeing this side of the story because I was "influenced"? As a matter of fact, I have spent my first season in India in Benaras, the centre of Hindu orthodoxy, without hearing the "Hindu fundamentalist" viewpoint at all. Many people who would later be very forthcoming with inside information and with strong opinions, were at first careful not to annoy this foreigner with viewpoints which they thought he would not understand. It is only when I had discovered the Hindu viewpoint for myself, and expressed my general sympathy with it, that my spokesmen at Benaras Hindu University would lay their cards on the table. The "secularist" viewpoint is (was) so dominant that cultured people did not want Westerners to associate them with the Hindu cause.

It is a somewhat misdirected criticism, to argue that someone says something because he has been influenced by someone else. Imputing motives or "influences" are an ad hominem argument which can never replace an ad rem criticism; it is always done precisely to compensate for the absence of such proper criticism. I refer to Arun Shourie's book "Individuals, Institutions, Processes", for a discussion of the bad habit of giving people a label ("that Naxalite", "that RSS man", to name a few which he himself has carried) and then acting as if their

views have been refuted by the label. This labelling is mental laziness. Ideas should be judged by merit, not by caste provenance.

A similar attempt to dismiss my conclusions without dealing with them, can be found in Sarvapalli Gopal's introduction to his book about the Ayodhya issue, "Anatomy of a Confrontation". His entire book does not contain any reply to the main arguments given in my book "Ram Janmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid", arguments which have also been brought up by Indian participants in various instances of the Ayodhya debate. Instead, Prof. Gopal thinks he can clinch the issue by calling me "a Catholic practitioner of polemics" who "fights the Crusades all over again on Indian soil". For Communists, swearwords are ten a penny, so I grant the august practitioner of swearology this comparatively mild exercise in his worn-out old game.

More interesting is his comment, apparently meant to justify his ignoring my arguments, that "it is difficult to take serious an author who draws his historical evidence from newspaper reports and speaks of the centuries when there were Muslim rulers in India as a bloodsoaked catastrophe". For a scientist, the place where findings are published, or the name of the author, or any other social circumstances of their publication, are of absolutely no consequence to the correctness of their contents. Only for party-line historians like those of JNU, who count more on power positions than on facts to convince people, the argument of authority is all-important. So, if in my book I have chosen to analyze at length (and partly repeat) the arguments given in the course of a debate conducted on the opinion page of the Indian Express, this does not in any way diminish the value of these arguments. I cannot help it that a number of the documents, facts and insights presented by people like Prof. A.R. Khan, Prof. Harsh Narain and Mr. A.K. Chatterjee, have been ignored in nicely published books by prestigious authors like the JNU historians, Prof. R.S. Sharma and Mr. A.A. Engineer. So I prefer genuine facts published to cheap paper to the distortions on the shiny paper of Prof. Gopal's own book.

Is it hard to take seriously someone who considers the "Muslim period" a blood-soaked catastrophe? That depends solely on whether the Muslim period was indeed a blood-soaked catastrophe. European

negationists applaud Hitler's reign and deny its horrors. Indian negationists eulogize Islamic rule and deny its millionfold murders and the catastrophe it wrought in Indian cultural, political and religious life. In both cases, the authentic records tell a different story. That is no doubt why the negationists refuse to "take seriously" the numerous authentic records of the massive destruction wrought by Islam.

And while we are dealing with the negationist reaction to my first book about the Islam problem in India, there was also a review in The Telegraph by Manini Chatterjee. She thought that my "very bad book" was marred by miserably tentative terminology, like "maybe" and "possibly". In the case of party-line history-writing, that would indeed be a grave shortcoming. Once the party has decided on what history should look like, a historian is no longer supposed to confront conflicting testimonies, to calculate probabilities, to make allowance for the uncertainties inherent in most historical research. That is why the Marxist participants in the Ayodhya debate have always been so cocksure in their statements: for them there can be no doubt whatsoever, and no amount of inconvenient testimony is going to shake them out of the absolute certainty of their foregone conclusions.

Incidentally, Mrs. Chatterjee finds my writing "suspiciously similar" in style and contents to that of the essayists in the first volume of "Hindu Temples, What Happened to Them". Never mind, there is not the first one who suspects that I don't exist and that Koenraad Elst is only a pen-name for some "Hindu communalist" writer. Let me take this opportunity to confirm that I exist. Mrs. Chatterjee should know that it is indeed quite possible for a non-Hindu to independently arrive at the same conclusions as accomplished Hindu intellectuals like Harsh Narain, Ram Swarup, Sitaram Goel, Jay Dubashi and Arun Shourie. If the information flow from India to the outside world was not so completely in negationist hands, many more Western scholars would have come out with similar views.

This is not the place for repeating the Ayodhya debate, so for the full presentation of evidence for the Ayodhya temple, submitted by the VHP scholars by me have been incorporated), I refer to the Voice of India publication "History vs. Casuistry". The "evidence" submitted by

the BMAC will be harder to come by, as it was not exactly fit for publication.

A last word about this "influence" allegation, which was also levelled against me by a colleague when I didn't display any knee-jerk reaction of indignation after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. My position, that a Hindu sacred place should simply be left to the Hindus, will be shared by any unbiased person: it is a natural insight not needing any "influencing", to approve a community's right to its own traditional sacred places. That is merely the simple view, which a child can understand. The opposite is true of the "secularist" view, viz. that the Hindus had no right to transform the architecture at their own sacred place, and that the Muslims do have rights over the Ram Janmabhoomi which they would never concede (nor be asked to concede) to anyone in the case of, say, Mecca. That view is based on double standards which are only acceptable to people who have undergone some "re-education", some ideological conditioning or "influencing".

4.2 MUSLIMS VS. ISLAM

"But I know some Muslims, and they are not fanatical at all."

And: "But I've been to Turkey, and people there are very friendly and hospitable, and they have nothing to do with fundamentalism. You confuse the mass of Muslims with the small minority of fanatics." And: "But in indonesia, Islam is very different. You confuse the war-hungry mentality of West Asia with the essence of Islam, which is very open."

Me too, I know some Muslims who are not fanatical at all. And I have had quite a good time in Muslim countries, starting with Pakistan. But this has not convinced me that Islam is a benevolent and tolerant religion.

We need not travel to Islamic countries to see how decent people whose membership of the Muslim community offends no one, can suddenly turn fanatical when Islam is at stake. All these Islamic demonstrators in our streets, who demanded Rushdie's death, and who told interviewers in so many words: "He must die, we will kill this Satan", were mostly very nice people when you talk to them in their coffee-houses. When the Japanese Rushdie translator was killed (summer 1991), spokesmen of the Japanese Muslim community said: "Whoever has killed him, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, at any rate it was his deserved punishment ordained by Allah." (Japanese public opinion has reacted very sharply against this statement of moral, if not actual, complicity in the murder) Yet, I had never heard of Japanese Muslims behaving in a less civic manner than their compatriots. Very nice people can turn vicious once a strong belief is at stake, especially the self-righteous belief fostered by Islam.

It is obviously true that many people in Muslim countries have good qualities. In countries yet unspoiled by consumerism, it is normal for people to be friendly and hospitable, they don't need Islam for that. For nomadic peoples, like the Turks until a few centuries ago, hospitality was a vital necessity, and this tradition has remained even after conversion to Islam. In fact, as nomadic traditions were strongly

present in Mohammed's own cultural surroundings, hospitality is indeed highly valued in Islam: not because Allah decreed it, but because Mohammed had never known otherwise. Friendliness and hospitality owe nothing to Islam, but are human values cherished by most cultures.

This merely proves the obvious: that human beings continue to be human even after conversion to Islam. People continue to cherish certain values regardless of the doctrines taught by the religion in which they find themselves. On top of that, the Islamic doctrine itself has adopted certain positive pre-Islamic values, and continues to instil them in its young generations. This is not a comparative merit vis-a-vis other religious and ethical systems, but it may be valuable in comparison with the moral disorientation which befalls ever more youngsters in the big cities. That is why American policy-makers have some appreciation for the role of Islam in inner-city Black communities. In the modern world, the alternative for the parental religion is mostly not another religion, but nihilism and more anarchy. Any religion will do to give a new sense of direction to lost souls, provided its elementary moral code is emphasized, rather than its sterile and divisive points of theology.

On the negative side too, Islam is not foreign to human nature. The negative values which Islam explicitly promote: (self-righteousness, narrow-mindedness, greed for booty, disrespect for others people's artistic and religious treasures), are all defects which may emerge in any human being. Muslims may believe that Islam was brought from heaven, but I am convinced that it was produced by a human being, and that all its positive and negative qualities are expressions of human nature. The point is that Islam gives certain negative tendencies systematic support whenever they are practised in relation to non-muslim people, institutions or values. The evil present in general human nature is sharpened and legitimized by Islam, and directed against the unbelievers in Mohammed's claims at prophethood. This legitimation of evil tendencies is an original contribution of Islam (even if it drew some inspiration from the Biblical Yahweh). It cannot be ascribed to Mohammed's pre-Islamic cultural milieu.

Most religions, regardless of their metaphysical and ritual differences, agree on a number of ethical values: self-control, harmony with our fellow-men, truthfulness, etc. Islam has adopted some elements of this universal heritage. Ordinary Muslims will point to these universal virtues when defending the claim that Islam stands for important ethical values. But Islam has also elevated to the rank of religious duty a number of attitudes and behaviour patterns which are the very opposite of this world-wide ethical consensus.

Whatever our judgement of the Islamic doctrine, it should be clearly distinguished from our attitude towards Muslim people. I guess most Muslims will not be too happy when you say: "I have nothing against you, I only object to your religion." Yet, even if it is psychologically rather delicate to take this position, it is nonetheless the correct position. People cannot help it that they have been born into the community that pledges allegiance to Islam. They cannot help it that they have been made to develop an emotional attachment to that arch-fanatical book the Quran, and to its author Mohammed. Moreover, many of them have followed their more humane feelings, and retained from their religious indoctrination only some universal ethical rules and some common life wisdom, quietly putting the more fanatical parts of Islamic teaching aside. Their effective religion is strictly not Islam, but a selection of the saner and more humane elements which Mohammed's followers had preserved or adopted from universal religion.

But whatever the human qualities of the people in Turkey, it is undeniable that a substantial number of these common Muslims (both Turkish and Kurdish) has taken part in terrorizing the Christians (in Kurdistan also Yezidi) minorities. Even when the secular state founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk accorded protection to the Christians (and restored some historical churches to them), the common people kept on harassing the minorities.

Before World War I, Christians formed a substantial percentage of the population of what is now called Turkey (if my information is correct, they even formed the majority in the capital city Istanbul). In 1915-18, the Armenians were massacred. In 1922, when Greece had tried to

liberate the territories with Greek populations on Turkey's West Coast, all the Greeks were killed or driven out. Since then, the pressure on not only the remaining Armenians and Greek-Orthodox, but also on the Chaldaean and Assyrian Christians in the South-East, has continued. Ethnic clashes between Muslim Kurds and Muslims Turks have often ended in a massacre of the religious minorities. By now, the Christians form less than 1% of Turkey's population. Many thousands have fled to European countries, and those remaining in Turkey have moved to the relative safety of the metropolis Istanbul. When questioned, they are often too ashamed or too afraid to tell their story. But ultimately, the truth comes out, and the conclusion is: "We had no choice but to go away."

An intriguing aspect of the Islamic terror against the Christians in Turkey is that it has not stopped with the state's secularization. In the khilafat period, Islam was safely in power, and from that position it could show generosity and ensure the "protection" which the Islamic state owes its zimmi minorities (except when the caliph himself declared a jihad against a specified people). But this generosity and protection should not be exaggerated: at least in the Balkan part of the Ottoman empire, Christians lived in constant fear. They were the target of never-ending terror, in the form of abductions of girls and boys and all kinds of harassment. It is such harassment at the local and popular level which has continued in the last decades and reached the farthest corners of the country. This process has also been helped by the fact that increased population pressure and better roads and transport have ended the virtual isolation in which many Christian communities in the mountains used to live. Once the contact with the Muslims became more intense, trouble followed. Protective measures by the secular government failed to control the hostility at the popular level.

It is always easy to blame the state and the men in uniform. But Islamic terror essentially does not emanate from uniforms and state power, but from a belief system which even the ordinary people have been fed. That is why a lot of Islamic terror never gets recorded by human-rights organizations like Amnesty International. A Christian Pakistani friend complained to me that Amnesty had not spoken out against the

religious persecutions in his homeland, even when these are a grim and undeniable reality. The fact is that much of this persecution and discrimination is not ordered by the state (the type of culprit with which Amnesty is familiar), but is a spontaneous attitude among sections of the Muslim population, egged on by nothing except the omnipresent Islamic doctrine.

As for Indonesia, let us note first of all that it is a non-secular and non-Islamic state. It requires its citizens to be "monotheists", but they can choose for themselves whether they worship Allah, Jesus, Ganesha or Buddha, regardless of the very different status which these divine characters have for their respective followers. Many Muslims are unhappy that the majority religion is prevented from making its mark on the polity (a frustration which many Hindus in India will understand, in spite of the sharp difference which would exist between a pluralist Hindu Rashtra and an oppressive Islamic state). True to type, some Muslims advocate the separation and islamization of their heartland, the island Aceh, while others are working for the islamization of the entire country.

The fact that Islam sits lightly on most Muslims in Indonesia, has not prevented a hard core to display the patented behaviour pattern of Islam. In Irian Jaya (West New Guinea), the Papua tribals are overrun by immigrant Muslims from Java. Many of them have already been converted by force or social pressure. In ex-Portuguese East Timor, which Indonesia has annexed against the United Nations' will, massacres of Christians or Animist natives by Muslim immigrants and soldiers have happened on a large scale. In Bali, the Hindus are not exactly persecuted, but Muslim immigrants from Java have acquired the positions of power. By the standards which Indian Muslims use to measure "discrimination against the minorities", the Hindus of Bali could claim that they are discriminated against. Nevertheless, the situation in most of Indonesia still seems to be much better than in Bangladesh (let alone Pakistan), and the communities live together rather peacefully. But it has taken tough rulers to uphold this relatively stable pluralism.

The impact of Islamic doctrine on Muslim populations is not uniform in intensity. Many Muslims ignore the Quranic injunctions to hostility. Some non-Muslims don't need the Quran for developing self-righteousness and intolerance. But this doesn't prove that Islam doesn't make a difference. Some people get drunk and yet drive their cars safely, others don't drink but are nonetheless a danger on the road; neither of these special cases can disprove the general correlation between drunken driving and traffic accidents.

4.3 IMMIGRANTS AND MUSLIMS

"But your criticism of Islam will contribute to the increasing animosity in Europe against Muslim immigrants. You play into the hand of xenophobic and racist politicians."

Of course I have nothing to do with racism and xenophobia, and I have my life-story to prove it. Given the democratic slump in Europe, I am convinced that a measured and carefully monitored immigration is necessary. My hometown is host to people from every country, and I have a lot of foreign friends, mostly Indian and Chinese. So, I am not at all against immigrants, and I have personally helped some to integrate or to get naturalized as citizens of my country. But my criticism of Islam stands: Islam is intrinsically separatist and hostile to neighbour communities.

The position of the "xenophobic and racist politicians" in Europe is just the opposite. They are against immigration, but most of them profess to have nothing against Islam. They say that Islam is quite all right, as long as it remains in Islamic countries. They want Muslims out of Europe, not because they think Islam is bad in itself, but because they consider it so foreign to our culture and value system that Muslim people cannot ever be integrated in our society.

Moreover, the really racist elements among them are mostly also anti-Jewish and consequently in sympathy with the Arabs. The leader of the French anti-immigrant party Front National, Jean-Marie Le Pen, had pleaded against French participation in the war against Saddam Hussain, and has on the whole been cultivating good relations with the Arab world. He thinks this is necessary in order to make a civilized deal with the source countries of most French immigrants, to make them take these immigrants back. Finally, hard rightists had always felt more at home with straightforward, regimented Islam than for instance with the "haggling Jewish money-lenders" or the anarchic, unfathomable polytheists in the colonies: in sub-Saharan Africa, the colonial powers used to actively support the spread of Islam.

Other "xenophobic and racist politicians" do speak out against Islam, but they don't go to the root of the problem. They like to point at some barbaric points of Islam (public lashings, amputation, purdah) merely to impress on the public that the Muslims are a barbaric lot with whom it is best not to co-exist. They have a very static view of Islam, by assuming that it is somehow the unalterable "native culture" of the Turkish and North-African populations. In reality, those populations have been lured or forced into Islam, and they may also grow out of it. It is well worth repeating that a distinction must be made between Muslims and Islam, between the doctrine and the people who have been fed the doctrine. Some people in the anti-immigrant lobby have attacked "the Muslims", but not one among them has attacked Islam as a doctrine.

If we put a criticism of Islam in the context of the modern world's need to develop ways of co-existence between different communities, and specifically the situation of Muslim immigrants in Europe, let us distinguish first between a few commonly used terms and concepts.

Racism means the belief that there is a qualitative inequality between human beings on the basis of their respective race. This was present in a relatively mild form in the paternalistic theory of the "white man's burden", the duty of superior whites to be responsible guardians of the inferior races, who are "half devil and half child" (both expressions are Rudyard Kipling's). Racism was present in a much more strident form in Nazism, which taught that there were master races, inferior races, and also doomed races which had to be exterminated. This hard racism was a materialistic theory, which tried to reduce the perceived moral and cultural differences between people to biological factors. Thus, the Jews were not defined as a religious community, but as a "race", and even converting to another religion could not alter your genetic Jewishness. Such race theories are quite marginal in the present European political context. Most political parties which are called "racist" by their opponents do not subscribe to a theory of racial inequality (eventhough citizens who privately cherish such racist convictions usually vote for them).

The present wave of anti-immigrant feelings in Europe should more properly be called xenophobia. Xenophobia is not racism, as it is not based on biological but on cultural differences. It is often understood as "hatred against outsiders", and in that case Islam itself is an intense case of xenophobia. But in the European context, it is the literal meaning that applies: "fear of outsiders". The psychology that is catching on in ever wider circles in Europe today, is that the immigrants are a threat to our safety and prosperity, not because of their skin colour but because of their cultural non-assimilation. Anti-immigrant campaigners contend that cultural assimilation become difficult once the immigrants are numerous enough to form islands of foreign culture in our society. Such islands would then constitute a threat to our social fabric. In the case of Muslims, it is suspected that they not only have little motivation to assimilate (as a consequence of their large quantity), but harbour a positive intention not to assimilate.

Muslims are not a race, and much less is Islam a race. A criticism of Islam has nothing to do with anti-Arab racism. Many Arabs are not Muslims. The Christians Arabs are heavily persecuted (as Mgr. Teissier, bishop of Algiers, recently came to testify in Leuven, something which he significantly refrains from doing in writing), and whenever they see no other option than to flee the Muslim world, I think Europe has the duty to welcome these non-Muslim Arabs without reservation (just like India should welcome all Hindu refugees, just like Germany accepts all East-European Germans, and just like Israel has welcomed the Jews of Ethiopia and Russia). On the other hand, many fanatical Muslims are not Arabs or Turks or Persians, but Europeans. European converts to Islam like to tell interviewers that "Islam is all about peace and brotherhood". What this means in practice became clear when one of the most famous converts, singer Cat Stevens alias Yusuf Islam, was asked for his opinion about the Rushdie affair. He said: "If I see Rushdie, I'll kill him." Fanaticism is not a racial characteristic, but an ideological position fostered by imbibing the Quran.

If criticism of Islam is racism, then what about criticism of Christianity? I don't believe anyone is ready to call Voltaire and other

European freethinkers racists. Voltaire criticized Christian doctrine and the power of the Catholic Church, but no one has accused him of racism against the Christian community. It so happens that the same Voltarie was equally critical of Islam, which he considered the fanatical religion par excellence. In "Mahomet ou le fanatisme", a theatre play written in defence of the value of religious tolerance, he uses Mohammed as model case of religious fanaticism. Again, no one has accused entertained the idea, he would have had to acknowledge that Voltaire's explicit admiration for other exotic cultures, like India and especially China, made him immune against any suspicions of "racism" or xenophobia.

The truth is that the cry of "racism" has become a favourite way of orphaned Communists to recapture the initiative and continue their old game of putting people against the wall, for volleys of swearology if not bullets. Thus, in my country there is an "anti-racist forum" called Charta '91, in which we find back most Flemist Marxists. The name is obviously modelled on Charta '77, the dissident forum in Czechoslovakia against the Communist regime (which forum included the playwright and later president Vaclav Havel). The Charta '91 people have the effrontery to try and capitalize on the moral prestige of Charta '77, while many of them were personally supporters of the very regime that used to sent Charta '77 people to jail. They are the very people who used to cast aspersions on the dissidents, who ridiculed anti-Communist voices in the West, and who led movements of which we now officially know that they were sponsored by Moscow (I remember shrugging off my father's remarks about Moscow's involvement in the pro-disarmament demonstration I ws going to; but he was right). For these exposed Gulag collaborators, anti-racism is the only way to remain on the offensive and to pre-empt a critical look into their own record.

As a practised non-racist, I feel free to ignore the insistent self-advertisement of organized "anti-racism". The racist attacks on foreigners in Europe are a most serious problem, but there is no need for "allying with Stalin to fight Hitler" now: we have to get both out of the way.

Secondly, "anti-racism" and "multiculturalism" (cfr. the Indian creed of "composite culture") are an easy cover for Islamic propagandists and their fellow-travellers to pre-empt all criticism of Islam. They take heart from some accomplished facts of confusion between racial and religious issues, such as the following. Recently, a British employer wanted to hire workers but made it clear that he would not employ Muslims, with reference to the plight of Salman Rushdie, whose condemnation to a life underground has been supported by most vocal Muslims in Britain. A pro-Muslim organization filed a complaint charging him with racial discrimination. The judge ruled that excluding Muslims is not a direct act of racism, as Muslims are not a race; but that it was nonetheless an indirect act of racism, as most Muslims are effectively non-European. He thought that a complete acquittal in this case would clear the way for attempts at racial discrimination under the cover of excluding the non-racial category of Muslims, so he imposed a token penalty.

In many European countries racism is an offence punishable by law, so I expect that the allegation of racism will be tried in the near future as a way of prohibiting criticism of Islam. At the level of public debate, there is already strong pressure tending towards an informal prohibition of Islam criticism. But it won't work.

Europe has built up a strong tradition of free speech and freedom of publication, and Islamic attempts to tamper with that freedom will only sharpen the awareness that no concessions can be made to these new forms of fanaticism and censorship. Moreover, the general public and many political commentators and politicians are vaguely aware of the intrinsic fanaticism of Islam. In the news, the word Islam is more often than not mentioned in a context of terrorism, so the pious claims that Islam is tolerant and peaceful at heart are regarded with healthy skepticism.

What really gives Islam an incurably bad name, is its treatment of women. No amount of apologetics can convince modern people that it is right to send a raped woman to jail if she cannot bring the four male witnesses which the shariat requires, and to sentence her, after a long time in custody, to public flogging for committing adultery or for

falsely accusing a good Muslim of rape. The said sentence only comes as a matter of clemency, and sometimes the strict penalty is given: stoning to death. Such things happen in Pakistan (where 60% of the women brought to trial for sex offences are cases of "unproven" complaints of rape, according to a Pakistani lawyer quoted in The Economist) and other Islamic states, and the world knows it. We have seen on television how women in Algeria demonstrated against the attempts to transform the country into an Islamic republic, and how they were attacked by fundamentalist counter-demonstrators. No one is fooled if some Islamic apologist explains how Islam has meant a liberation of women. The women's movement will contribute a lot to Islam's undoing.

Most non-specialist observers are broadly aware of the retrograde and barbaric character of Islam. Nonetheless, governments waver when they are confronted with Islamic threats and blackmail. Margaret Thatcher has stood by Salman Rushdie, in spite of the latter's invective against her (both before and after the fatwa). But John Major prohibited a manifestation to "celebrate" Salman Rushdie's 1,000th day in hiding, in order not to disturb the negotiations over hostages in Lebanon. The organizers of the Books Fair in Frankfurt had invited the Iranian state publishing-house to participate, just when the Japanese Rushdie translator had been murdered, and it was only after strong protest from the German Writers Association that the invitation was withdrawn.

The French government accepted a compromise on the issue of girls wearing a chador in school, which Muslims claimed as a victory (according to Kalim Siddiqui, speaking at the 6th European Muslim Conference in Genk, April 1992, a veiled woman "carries the flag of Islam: she makes a statement that European civilization is unacceptable to us, that it is a disease, a pestilence on mankind"). In November 1991, it sacked Jean-Claude Barreau, a top civil servant who had written that Islam has been a destructive and regressive religion. Muslims protested that his book contained "simplistic opinions" about Islam, and obtained that the government distanced itself from his views by sacking him. It is unthinkable that a French government would sack a civil servant for writing against Christianity, but Islam

has already wrested the privilege of immunity from criticism. Incidentally, the French government's behaviour disproves the Indian belief that Muslim appeasement is a consequence of the desire to win over the "Muslim vote bank": few Muslims in France were voters, and the socialist government's hand was not forced by vote politics, but by a mentality.

In an interview with the leading French newspaper *Le Figaro*, Jean-Claude Barreau explains: "This shows to what extent that which I had felt in advance was true: Islam is a taboo which you cannot defy unpunishedly. Today, there is something very disturbing for the foundations of our Republic, viz. for secularism... It is possible for a top civil servant to doubt Christ's divinity without creating a ripple, but it is impossible for him to speak of Prophet Mohammed... [I have been hit by] not a law, but a collective and almost unanimously observed taboo. This taboo is not typical for the Left... I have found out that there is of course a Leftist pro-Islamism linked with the post-colonial complex, but also a Rightist pro-Islamism... There has been strong pressure from Islamic embassies. That this pressure exists, shows to what extent certain Islamic circles are incapable of listening to criticism. But there are dissidents in the Islamic world whom we are not at all helping with our attitude."

To the question whether democracy was lacking in aggressiveness, he replied: "Rather, it lacks courage... My book, it is nothing but the right of intellectual intervention. But because it concerns Islam, it is deemed insupportable. There are double standards at work." He compares with similar topics: "This book is not more scandalous than those which I have published about Christianity, about Israel, or about the art of government. I realized I was touching on a taboo, but I didn't know it was that strong."

Muslims are already a considerable pressure group, but what really weakens the position of European governments before Islamic arrogance is the pro-Islamic rhetoric of a small but noisy section of media people and leftist political circles. Some of these fellow-travellers of Islam are well-intending but inconsistent softies: they have not renounced their young days' habit of mocking Christian

obscurantist customs and irrational beliefs, and yet they are defending (or asking us to "understand") similar things in Islam. Some are husbands of Muslim women whose parents, following Muslim law, insisted on their son-in-law's conversion: like the ancestors of many Muslim fanatics, they think this conversion is a superficial thing without any consequences, but already they feel compelled to defend Islamic causes. Others are Marxists who have shifted their focus from anti-Fascist through anti-racist and pro-immigrant, to pro-Muslim.

The influence of these fellow-travellers will probably be blown away soon. Their grip on the public arena is weak compared to that of India's secularists, and is totally dependent on the public's modest sense of incompetence regarding Islam and on its concomitant care not to make rash and unfair judgements. As soon as the facts concerning Islam become more well-known, not as a general feeling but as an authoritative opinion equipped with details of Islamic scripture and history, the game of Islam's public relations offensive will be over. But until then, this vocal section makes it difficult to speak out freely about the nature of Islam, and it puts psychological pressure on governments and police forces, which prevents an effective policy against Islamic arrogance. Today, there are not many intellectuals in Europe who say the truth about Islamic fanaticism, partly out of ignorance, partly for fear of negative press coverage. Those who do, like John Laffin (*The Dagger of Islam*), are given little publicity, or denounced as prejudiced alarmists.

In 1990, a Pakistani living in Holland published a book, *De Ondergang van Nederland* ("The Downfall of the Netherlands"), about the mistaken Muslim policy of his host country. He stated that Holland was spending its laudable tolerance on the wrong people: it gives all the facilities to a growing Islamic establishment in its immigrant communities. After demonstrating the intolerant behaviour of Muslims worldwide, he predicts that "the naive and mindless Dutch" are feeding a poisonous baby which in a few decades will devour them and replace their tolerant and pluralist society with an Islamic republic. Unfortunately, he too treats "the Muslims" as a static entity, and he idealizes the Europeans instead of seeing that our level of tolerance is

the result of a historical process which the Muslims can and should also go through (discarding their Muslim-ness on the way, like Europe largely discarded Christianity). Because he took his own assessment of Islam seriously, and with the Rushdie affair still very much in the air, he did not want to make his name known, so he wrote under the pseudonym Mohammed Rasool.

The reaction of the press was most interesting. The leftist press had nothing but scorn for his message, and concentrated on the more sensational effort of finding out the writer's identity. At first they were very sure that it had to be some fascist racist Dutchman trying to sound more convincing by adopting an exotic pseudonym. But Mohammed Rasool gave interviews, wearing a mask that showed enough of his face to prove that he was not a native European. Interviewers tried to snatch his foreigners' passport to find out his name, but he was faster. Finally, after a lot of detective work, they did find out his real name, and made it public. If ever Mohammed Rasool gets killed, these mindless leftist are to blame.

To be sure, he has not been killed yet. He has not criticized the Prophet himself, and the fair name of Mohammed is what Muslims are most particular about. Criticizing the Muslim community or the doctrine of Islam is less dramatic (Rushdie had not criticized Islam, but had mocked the Prophet). As the Persian proverb says: you can make jokes about God, but be careful with Mohammed. Secondly, the Muslim communities in continental Europe keep a low profile, in conformity with their Saudi sponsors' policy of penetrating Europe gently (as opposed to the Iranian approach). Finally, this Mohammed Rasool was an unknown fellow in a small language-area, not a prize-winning English writer. So there was no fatwa to kill this Dutch- Pakistani warner against the Islamic threat.

But does that prove the opinion expressed by the more sympathetic right-wing commentators, that Rasool may have a point but that he has exaggerated the danger of Islam in Holland? At the moment, Holland has one of the lowest percentages of Muslims in the European Community, and they are not making much trouble (except that they took to the streets to demand Rushdie's death). But that may change

fast: their birth rate is very high, and a continued inpouring from North Africa is just about inevitable. As their numbers go up, the Muslims' attitude may change too. A keen awareness of power equations may be at work: when they are small and weak, they are wise enough not to be too troublesome, but when they become strong, their demands go on increasing; that at any rate is the Indian experience. Policy-makers should consider more than only the most optimistic prognosis.

It is mathematically certain that Islam will ultimately disappear. An artificial belief system imposed by force can only survive by means of a continued indoctrination. Relax that, and Islam will wither away fast. With the modern media and the unprecedented pace of progress, cultural circumstances can emerge (not by a conspiracy, but by the laws of the market and similar natural developments) that will make Islam look like a strange antiquity even to those brought up as Muslims. So, Islam will certainly go. But the question is what it can still do in the meantime.

In the Soviet Union, several jihads are on the cards. Kazakhstan may soon become an Islamic republic, and it has an advanced nuclear arsenal. The president (chosen in an election from which Russians were excluded) of the Muslim Chechen-Ingoosh republic has declared that in order to obtain independence, his people will use terrorist attacks against Russian targets including nuclear facilities. He has been arming several Muslim separatisms in the northern Caucasus and effectively supporting the separatist violence in Abkhasia. Iran, Iraq and Pakistan are building their nuclear strike capability. More than ever, Pakistan will be the frontline of an impressive block of Islamic states with nuclear teeth. India will no doubt be the prime target, Russia will definitely suffer, but Europe too may be put in trouble by an Islamic upsurge from the inside. We simply cannot predict what effect an expected international conflict in the name of Islam will have on a European Muslim community that will have become much more numerous and well- organized.
